

Israel frees Arab-American suspect

RAMALLAH, West Bank (R) — Israel released on Thursday an Arab-American jailed for six months as an alleged activist of the Islamic group of Hamas, Palestinians said. They said Muhammad Jarad, one of three Palestinian-Americans whose detention in January prompted a formal complaint for Israel's chief ally Washington over lack of access to the men, was told he would be deported to the United States in four days. Mr. Jarad, of Chicago, was charged in March with activism in a hostile organisation and given a six-month sentence in a plea bargain that included a promise to leave the country. He was released to the family home in a village in the occupied West Bank, they said. Arab-American Muhammad Salah, also jailed since January, has denied charges he funded arms purchases and organised West Bank guerrilla operations of Hamas, the main target of Israel's December expulsion to South Lebanon of 415 Palestinians. A military court in February freed a third Palestinian-American detained at the same time. Israeli officials have backed away from a highly public initial campaign to portray Mr. Salah and Mr. Jarad as part of a "Hamas command" in the United States.

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King Hussein to visit France

AMMAN (AFP) — King Hussein is due in Paris Thursday for a four-day visit and talks with President François Mitterrand, officials said here Saturday. They said the talks would focus on efforts to jumpstart the Middle East peace talks and on bilateral issues. In Paris, the president's office confirmed the meeting would take place Thursday. King Hussein, who last travelled to Paris in March 1992, is currently in London on a private visit which began July 9.

Yemen reports oil discovery

SANAA (AP) — Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas' office announced Saturday that the French company Total had discovered commercial quantities of oil in southern Yemen. The announcement said specifics about the finds in a total concession in East Shabwa would be announced next month. The statement did not indicate initial estimates of 12,000 barrels a day. Exports from the site are expected to begin next year, probably in February, according to officials.

Turkey says 18 rebels killed

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Troops killed 18 Kurdish guerrillas in southeastern Turkey in a crackdown on separatist violence, the regional governor's office announced Saturday. The fighting took place Friday between the provinces of Bitlis and Siirt, it said. Also Friday, a minibus carrying villagers near the Iraqi border hit a mine which was believed to be planted by the Kurdish guerrillas, killing two passengers, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Ireland fears secret Britain-Unionist deal

DUBLIN (AFP) — The Irish government Saturday voiced fears that Britain had reached a secret "deal" with Ulster Unionist deputies over the future of Northern Ireland in exchange for support over a crucial confidence vote, a press report said. Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring told the Irish Times that he would be "very concerned if there was a deal struck" which could "jeopardise the prospects" for multilateral talks on the political future of the north, which has been wracked by communal strife for 25 years. British Premier John Major earlier gave assurances that "nothing was asked for, nothing was offered and nothing was given" in exchange for support from the pro-British Unionists for the government Thursday and Friday on votes on the Maastricht social chapter and on a motion of confidence in the government (see page 8). But Dublin's fears were fuelled by Unionist MP Ken Maginnis who, following the votes, predicted "a better form of government for Northern Ireland" within the coming weeks and months.

Rocket kills four Pakistani troops

PESHAWAR (R) — A rocket fired from Afghanistan killed four Pakistani paramilitary troops Saturday when it hit their border post in the northwestern district of Chitral, government officials said. They said the rocket was fired by a Pakistani fugitive who was involved in a dispute over the ownership of a portion of the local forest and had crossed into Afghanistan.

Two Russian MIGs collide at air show

FAIRFORD, England (AP) — Two Russian MiG-29 fighters collided Saturday while flying at an air show in western England, but police said no injuries were reported. The civil aviation authority said the aircraft crashed away from a crowd estimated at 250,000 people. Both pilots ejected but their condition was not known, the authority said. Police said one plane crashed on the base and the other in a field nearby. "Two parachutes appeared in the sky. There was a plume of smoke above the runway," said Don Bradner, one of thousands of people attending the Fairford International Air Tattoo.

Arafat calls for Arab summit on peace talks

PLO leader reports U.S. pledge on sick exiles

Combined agency despatches

SANAA — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has called for an Arab summit to find a way to break the deadlock in Middle East peace talks.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader, arriving in Yemen's capital Sanaa late Friday, did not suggest a date for the summit but said it should be held to coordinate an Arab stance on the peace talks, the Yemeni News Agency reported.

Mr. Arafat, who is expected to meet Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, said the U.S.-brokered peace talks were at a "dead end" because of an American position paper which he said was biased towards Israel.

The U.S. paper was presented at the end of the 10th round of talks in Washington in June.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is due to visit the Middle East soon to nudge forward the talks, which opened in Madrid in 1991 and completed 10 rounds of negotiations.

Mr. Arafat also said the United States had promised the immediate return to their homes of 70 ailing Palestinian expellees in South Lebanon.

He said Palestinians received the pledge after talks with Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Ross was in the Middle East earlier this month to try to get the negotiations back on track.

"Discussions were concluded on this subject from all angles and we took a promise that ... 70 ill deportees would be immediately returned," Mr. Arafat was quoted as saying by the Yemeni News Agency.

"We are waiting for the imple-



Yasser Arafat

ment of this promise," he said.

On Thursday, 87 ailing Palestinian expellees drew Israeli tank and artillery fire when they marched towards Israeli lines from their tent camp in South Lebanon to demand medical treatment.

The marchers are among 395 exiles stuck there since Israel expelled them last December.

The men had appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) last month to evacuate 28 of their sick. The ICRC says contacts are continuing to arrange an evacuation.

Hitch in Tunis meeting

Two Israeli members of parliament (MP) who travelled to Tunis to meet with Mr. Arafat will not see him as planned, due to a change in the PLO leader's schedule, one of the legislators said Saturday.

"It's a shame, I'm a bit disappointed," said Labour MP Yael Dayan, the daughter of former Defence Minister Moshe Dayan.

Mr. Arafat left on a tour of Asia, Palestinian sources said, a few hours prior to Ms. Dayan's arrival Friday along with fellow MP Abdul Wahab Darawshah of the Arab Democratic List.

Mr. Arafat "conveyed his apologies for this hitch," Ms. Dayan said. She dismissed the notion that there were political motives behind Mr. Arafat's change in plans.

"The PLO is not only Yasser Arafat," she said.

The two MPs met Friday with Hakam, Balawi, the PLO's representative in Tunis and a member of the Central Committee of Fateh, the main group within the PLO.

"We had good discussions," Ms. Dayan said, adding that she had conveyed a message from her Labour Party colleagues calling for a conference in Tunis in September grouping members of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) and PLO representatives.

Ms. Dayan and Mr. Darawshah, an Israeli Arab, want the meeting to be sponsored by Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali and hope to meet with Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia before leaving.

"We've already received positive signs," Mr. Darawshah said. He met Mr. Ben Yahia in Washington recently.

Ms. Dayan said there was a growing sentiment among Knesset members and Israeli government officials in favour of direct talks with the PLO.

"It's inevitable. We can't sidestep the PLO," she said, adding, however, that she thought it would be "premature" for her government to formally recognise the Palestinian leadership it has

(Continued on page 5)

U.N. camera team due in Iraq today

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — A team of U.N. inspectors will head into Iraq Sunday to install monitoring cameras at missile testing sites that were at the centre of a row that could have ended with a U.S. military strike.

U.N. spokesman Jan Fischer said the team of three experts, headed by American William Eckert, was expected to arrive in Bahrain Saturday night and carry on into Baghdad Sunday morning.

What was to have been a routine U.N. mission in early June blew up into a major international confrontation when Iraq refused to allow inspectors to install cameras at two missile testing sites.

On instructions from U.N. headquarters in New York a team then tried to seal off the two sites, but the Iraqis blocked them despite warnings from the Security Council of "serious consequences."

On July 19 the U.N. official in charge of disarming Iraq, Rolf Ekens, won an agreement that the Security Council later approved.

Under the interim accord, the surveillance cameras are to be set up at two sites south of Baghdad but not activated before high-level talks in New York on the long-term monitoring of Iraq's military potential in late August or early September.

It is this installation that Mr.

Yeltsin gets boost

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin got a boost Saturday when 11 Russian regions backed his drive for a new constitution.

Representatives of the north-western regions, meeting in the city of Pskov, passed a declaration saying a new constitution should be passed this year. Itar-Tass news agency reported.

The meeting, attended by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, also backed Mr. Yeltsin in his opposition to unilateral demands by several regions for an upgrading of their status within the Russian Federation.

Its statement warned that a rise in regional and national separatism was dangerously similar to the situation which led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Mr. Yeltsin will cut short his holiday and return to Moscow Sunday following calls for him to respond quickly to parliamentary attacks on his leadership, his spokesman said Saturday.

As Mr. Yeltsin steered himself for a new phase of the power struggle, the Russian people were confused and panicked over the money in their pockets after a shock announcement on Saturday that all pre-1993 banknotes would become obsolete almost overnight.

People rushed to exchange or spend their old roubles before they go out of circulation from Monday

2 killed in Somali attack on U.S. troops

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Two Somali gunmen were killed Saturday after they and three or four others ambushed two U.S. armoured cars in the Medina district of southern Mogadishu, wounding two American soldiers, military spokesman said.

Sergeant-Major Patrick R. Ballou, 42, and Sergeant Michael D. Bower, 28, were in the second of a two-car convoy coming from the airport and heading for the U.N. forces' headquarters, Captain Jonathan Dahms said.

Sgt. Ballou suffered bullet wounds to his shoulder and right hand and Sgt. Bower to his right knee. Both were hospitalised but their condition was not critical,

Capt. Dahmas said. The armed Somalis who attacked them fled leaving two of their number dead.

Snipers later opened fire on a Pakistani checkpoint in the south of Mogadishu but there were no reports of any casualties.

U.N. officials say up to 10 U.S. servicemen with the multinational peacekeeping force in Somalia have been wounded in attacks by Somali gunmen in the past week.

Earlier a U.N. spokesman told a news briefing that Friday night and Saturday morning had been quiet for the first time since June 5 when 24 Pakistani troops were shot dead by Somali gunmen.

The U.N. has offered a reward

of \$25,000 for the capture of warlord Mohammad Farah Aided, held responsible for the killing of the Pakistanis.

U.S. troops have led the counter-attacks against forces loyal to the fugitive warlord, and U.S. Rapid International Force troops carried out a further sloop during Friday night for hidden arms in southern Mogadishu.

No significant quantity of arms was found this time, but the raid helped Mogadishu have "a very peaceful night," according to Capt. Dahms.

See pages 2 and 10 for related stories

China says U.S. missile reports fabricated

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen Saturday denied U.S. charges that Peking had shipped components for missiles to Pakistan. The claims were "without foundation" and "simply fabricated," said Mr. Qian, who will hold talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher here Sunday (See page 9). Mr. Qian, responding to a question at a luncheon hosted by the Foreign Correspondents Club of Singapore, said the U.S. allegation would not cloud his talks with Mr. Christopher. "I hope through this meeting our two sides will give impetus to improvement in relations," he said. Mr. Qian is believed to be the most senior Chinese official to respond to the U.S. charge that Peking had secretly shipped components for M-11 missiles to Pakistan. Washington has said it has compelling evidence to back its claim. The missiles with a range of about 450 kilometres are believed capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Mr. Christopher has arrived Saturday for talks with foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), who are holding their annual meeting here. Mr. Qian said he hoped his talks with Mr. Christopher would be satisfactory and constructive despite the U.S. allegations.



FLOODS IN INDIA: Children swim in a flooded street with a partially submerged bus and truck as a train goes by overhead in the eastern Bihar

Colony. Over 500 people have perished throughout India due to recent monsoon rains (see page 8)

AFP photo

Syria: U.S. must make Israel see sense

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria said Saturday U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher should work to help Israel grasp the "realities" of the Middle East peace process — namely that it should trade territory for peace.

Damascus Radio, which reflects government thinking, said in a commentary:

"The more Christopher succeeds in making Israel come to the grip of the realities of just and comprehensive Middle East settlement, and give up its illusions, the more fruitful his visit will be."

Mr. Christopher is due to visit the region on July 31 to try to breathe new life into the deadlocked 20-month-old Arab-Israeli peace talks.

The radio said Arabs were serious "in achieving peace but this seriousness is lacking on Israel's part."

Israel has over the last two weeks sent reinforcements across the border into its self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, where six of its soldiers have been killed since July 8.

In Damascus, the official Syrian Al Thawra charged Saturday that Israeli attacks on Lebanon aimed to hamper Christopher's tour.

The attacks were also designed to split the Syrian and Lebanese positions in the peace talks with Israel and force Beirut to sign a separate peace treaty with Israel, it said.

Hizbollah vows to continue attacks, page 2

Israelis wound 4 children in Gaza

OCCUPIED GAZA (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot and wounded four children, one a girl aged four, in clashes in a refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip, Palestinians said Saturday.

The children, the oldest of whom was 12, were among a total of six Palestinians wounded in the Shati camp during clashes with stone-throwing demonstrators late Friday, they added.

The four-year-old's father said she was playing in an alley near her house when she was wounded in the abdomen.

The army said it was checking the report.

The Israeli human rights group B'tselem last week launched a campaign to stem the rising toll of Palestinian Arab children killed by troops.

It said troops killed as Palestinian children in the last six months, double the number of children killed in all of 1992. It described the toll as having reached a "magnitude unprecedented" since the Palestinian revolt began in December, 1987.

Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur this week dismissed as a "blood libel" suggestions that Israeli troops deliberately aimed at Palestinian children.

Unknown assailants wounded an Israeli soldier who was standing in front of an army administration building in the Gaza Strip Saturday, a military spokesman said.

The soldier was "moderately" wounded when the assailants opened fire at the army's "civil administration" authority in Gaza City, he said. No other details were immediately available.

Hamas wins Gaza vote

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has won a key test of popular support in the Gaza Strip, defeating a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) list in an election of the Strip's accountants association, Palestinians said.

They said Hamas beat a combined list of the PLO's mainstream Fateh faction and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) to take control of the group.

Professional association elections are seen as primary indicators of public opinion in the Strip.

Palestinians said the vote Friday of the association's 1,129 members reflected discontent over deadlocked Middle East peace talks, in which Fateh directs Palestinian delegates.

It was also a protest at alleged corruption by PLO supporters, they said.

After a wave of guerrilla attacks on Israel, the occupation power vowed to break the power of Hamas, the main target of its December expulsion to Lebanon of 415 Palestinians.

OPEC in turmoil over price

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was in turmoil Saturday over how to rescue depressed oil prices.

As OPEC President Jean Ping of Gabon shuttled around the Middle East in search of a formula for how the organisation should proceed, top producers Iran and Saudi Arabia remained at odds.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA said Iranian oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh told Mr. Ping in a meeting in Tehran on Saturday that emergency talks should be convened immediately — something the Saudis disavowed Mr. Ping from doing two days before.

"Aqazadeh... called for immediate convening of the OPEC emergency meeting, and said cooperation of the members and their commitment to what has been approved by OPEC is a determining factor in market stabilisation," IRNA said.

Plans for a session next Wednesday in Vienna fell through amid charges and counter-charges by Saudi Arabia and Iran, the cartel's largest producers, over the causes of the oil glut that has sent prices tumbling.

Tehran Television also quoted Mr. Aqazadeh as saying: "The present crisis could be overcome if OPEC countries abide by their quotas."

He said the market had been thrown into turmoil by the possibility of Iraq's first international sale since the 1991 Gulf war. Kuwait's refusal to accept the quota assigned at the June OPEC meeting, and excess World supply.

He made no mention of Saudi Arabia, which was the target of a Thursday editorial in the Tehran Times calling on the kingdom to cut back its output.

In Saudi Arabia on Saturday, the daily Al Riyadh responded with an editorial headlined, "Iran declares war... on OPEC."

The Saudis believe that unless prices deteriorate sharply it would be better to wait for a clear sign on whether U.N.-Iraqi talks on a limited sale of Iraqi oil will succeed.

They also do not want to be subjected to demand that they reduce their eight million barrel per day (bpd) output — which they increased by 2.5 million after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The real solution, they think, would be to stop cheating on quotas. In an unusually blunt statement early on Friday, Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Nazer said this was the solution, pointing the finger at Iran. Tehran denies cheating.

Mr. Ping was quoted on Tehran Radio as saying he was looking forward to the success of the emergency meeting, though he did not say when it would be held. Before leaving for Iran he said it would not be before the second week of August.

"My feeling is that there is a strong will to overcome the existing crisis," he said.

From Iran he flew on to Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, OPEC's fourth largest producer.

See earlier story on page 6

Street childrens' massacre outrages Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — People throughout Brazil were in a state of shock Saturday following the slaying of seven street children here.

And many were pointing the finger of blame at the government for failing to curb street violence.

Gunmen shot and killed the children, aged between 10 and 17, outside the Igreja de Candelaria, Rio's largest Roman Catholic church, on Friday.

Two more children hit by gunfire were in deep comas in a Rio hospital Saturday.

Witnesses said the military police carried out the attack and late Friday three members of the force were arrested.

One of the arrested policemen was identified by a survivor.

About 50 homeless children were sleeping in front of the church, located at the intersection of Rio de Janeiro's two most important streets when the gun-

men closed in.

Brazilians' reaction to the massacre ranged from horror to scathing condemnations of the government.

Rio Juvenile Court Judge Liborni Siqueira said the killings were "a direct consequence of the widespread neglect of the federal authorities and the state and city governments."

The influential newspaper, Jornal do Brasil, said: "The massacre and the children's morning of terror at the Candelaria church is the clearest warning that the law-enforcement structure is rotten."

The popular O Dia newspaper said: "Rio de Janeiro is used to violence, but it cannot put up with the cruelty of this massacre and demands the murderers be punished."

On Friday President Itamar Franco said the killings horrified him and he ordered an immediate investigation into the crimes.

"Like all Brazilian people I too am horrified by the murders," Mr. Franco said in a statement read by his spokesman, Francisco Baker.

Officials say 351 children have been killed in the state of Rio de Janeiro so far this year compared with 425 in all of 1992.

Paulo Mello, a lawmaker who headed a parliamentary investigation of deaths squads last year, called Friday for the federal government to clean up the Rio state police.

Human rights groups have accused business owners of hiring gunmen, including off-duty or retired police officers, to eliminate street children suspected of stealing.

Mr. Mello estimates that some 3,000 minors sleep on the streets of Rio, and that some 50,000 live off begging and performing odd jobs and services.

The Rio state government cal-

led on the public to phone a government line with "any information that could help lead to the imprisonment of those criminals, even in cases in which police institutions are involved."

The president of the National Episcopal Conference of Brazil, Luciano Mendes de Almeida, urged Rio State Governor Leonel Brizola to carry out an urgent probe of the crimes to avoid any more slayings.

According to a 14-year-old survivor of the shootings, a man got out of a car carrying a plate pretending that he was going to offer them food, but as he drew near he pulled a gun from the plate and began to shoot.

Mario Volpi, coordinator of the Movement of Street Children, said the shooting followed a quarrel Friday between the children and police over leaving the church, during which one of the youngsters threw a rock at officers.

Hizbollah vows continued attacks against Israel

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) has vowed to fire rockets into Israel whenever Israeli shelling in southern Lebanon caused civilian casualties.

"Our plan is to fight Israel by ambushes, by storming its positions and by all direct means against its soldiers and agents," Sheikh Naim Kassem, Hizbollah's deputy secretary general, told a news conference in Beirut's southern suburbs.

"But when Israel uses the ugliness of its aggression to harm our beloved people and inflict death and wounding then it is our right to use any means we see appropriate to defend our people and our land."

Guerrillas fired five Katyusha rockets into northern Israel Friday after the fiercest shelling from Israeli forces on the south this year wounded three civilians, security sources said.

No one was hurt in the pre-dawn rocket attacks.

Hizbollah guerrillas mounted a massive offensive on Israel's self-styled "security zone" in the south Thursday, killing an Israeli soldier and wounding another and two allied militiamen.

The attacks sparked the fiercest artillery retaliation this year. Security sources said Israeli and allied gunners fired more than 500 shells into Hizbollah-held territory.

Israel brought eight artillery guns as well as ammunition trucks into the "security zone" Friday, security sources said.

Israel reinforced the 15-kilometre deep zone with 35 big guns and 100 soldiers last week amid threats that it would hit back hard after five Israeli soldiers were killed on July 8 and 9.

Sheikh Kassem ruled out any massive Israeli retaliation, saying it would disrupt Middle East peace talks which were favouring Israel and because the Jewish state would suffer human losses in an invasion.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Thursday that massive retaliatory action would not end attacks from Lebanon.

Sheikh Kassem said the statement was "frank and an admission of reality."

A Hizbollah military commander, who briefed reporters, said two guerrillas were wounded in Thursday's assaults. The attacks, he added, had been launched to prove the Israeli army was "a paper tiger" even when it was on full alert.

Israel last week warned Syria to curb guerrillas in Lebanon by cutting arms supply lines from

Iran.

Sheikh Kassem said no Arab party asked Hizbollah to restrain itself in the south. "If big powers want to calm things down, then the matter is clear: Let Israel pull out from the land it occupies."

Israeli officials Friday accused Syria of using the Lebanon-based guerrillas to fight a war by proxy against Israel.

"This is an honour and not an accusation," Sheikh Kassem said. Flanked by bodyguards armed with pistols, the white-turbaned cleric denied Hizbollah stepped up attacks shortly before or during rounds of Arab-Israeli peace talks in an bid to sabotage them.

"We rejected the talks from the start and consider resistance the alternative. Attacks escalate or diminish because of practical circumstances and are unrelated to the political issue," he said.

Asked what would Hizbollah do if Arab states reached a peace agreement with Israel, Sheikh Kassem said Hizbollah would refuse to abide by such a truce "no matter what the consequences are."

A senior Israeli official said military initiatives in Lebanon would not be increased despite the recent escalation in tensions. But he warned the policy could change at any time.

"A situation of panic is being created here," Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur said, warning against premature action.

Opposition parties have called for a stronger military response to the increased anti-Israeli activity in South Lebanon.

Ariel Sharon, a former defence minister, accused the government of indecision. "Take an initiative, don't take one day's rest, we don't need large operations, small ones will do," he told Israel Radio.

"The government will make a decision based only on the facts of the moment," Mr. Gur said.

Mr. Rabin said the solution to Israel's problems on its northern border lay in negotiations, not military action.

"I don't want to delude anyone into thinking that we can solve the problem by a large operation," he told reporters. "Because of that illusion, we paid a heavy price, a painful price of hundreds of dead."

He was referring to Israel's war in Lebanon from 1982 to 1985, launched by Mr. Sharon. The war, planned as a limited operation, forced Mr. Sharon's resignation after the deaths of hundreds of Israeli soldiers and thousands of Lebanese civilians.

U.S. team reviewing Somalia mission

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. officials are in Somalia reviewing the effectiveness of the U.N. mission there and U.S. involvement, the State Department said Friday.

"It's a serious interagency effort to look at...all the aspects of the work over in Somalia," said spokesman Mike McCurry.

The six-member team, staffed principally by the State Department and the Agency for International Development, arrived Tuesday in Somalia and is to return next Tuesday. Diplomat David Shinn, the State Department's coordinator for Somalia, is leading the group.

Mr. McCurry said that senior administration officials decided to send the team after concerns were raised by "a variety of people."

The U.S. delegation is meeting with U.N. personnel in Somalia, relief organisations and Somalia political leaders to gather information on the relief and military operations and how they are related, Mr. McCurry said.

"They're looking at things like the progress that's being made for political reconstruction, economic development. They're looking at the security situation in the country, both in the countryside and in Mogadishu," he said.

A primary goal of the mission is to determine how much Somalia's warlord Mohammed Farah Aided and his forces were disrupting civilian authority and relief operations, he added.

The U.N. peacekeeping operations in Somalia has come under increasingly harsh criticism from aid organisations and U.N. officials who object that its military actions are undermining the mission's humanitarian goals.

On Wednesday, Jan Eliasson, under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, said that "continued military actions in Mogadishu can result in the marginalisation of the humanitarian dimensions of the United Nations mission in Somalia."

In the past few weeks, 36 international peacekeepers have been killed and some 120 more have been injured in Mogadishu. Military strikes have been carried out against Aided's forces, which the United Nations holds responsible for the deaths of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers killed June 5.

The status of the operation in UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia II) is something that is under review by the United States. We've got a six-person interagency team led by former Ambassador David Shinn there right now," Mr. McCurry said.

The team is conducting an on-site assessment of various aspects of both the U.N. mission there and the U.S. participation. They plan to prepare a report for senior administration officials...that will be used in evaluating the status of the mission, the operations on the ground in Somalia," he added.

German minister to visit

Defence Minister Volker Ruehe will fly to Somalia to visit troops serving with the United Nations in the biggest deployment of German land forces outside North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) territory since World War II.

Mr. Ruehe's spokesman said Saturday said the minister would fly to Somalia Sunday and go to Belet Huen, some 300 kilometres north of Mogadishu, chosen as the base for 1,700 German soldiers because it is relatively peaceful.

Germany this week began a month-long airlift of a main contingent of about 1,500 soldiers to Somalia. The mission is controversial at home for marking an end to Bonn's policy of military restraint since World War II.



Somali policemen armed with wooden sticks try to maintain order during a food distribution organised by the international organisation Care in the Wahar Adeb, north of Mogadishu Saturday. It was the first distribution in this area since June 5 (AFP photo)

Somalia secession chief says West sympathetic to his cause

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The leader of the breakaway Somaliland said Saturday he had received a sympathetic hearing when he put his case to Western donor nations in his first attempt to publicise the needs of the territory.

Ibrahim Igal, interim president of Somaliland, which is not recognised internationally, said he had met representatives of the European Community (EC), Canada, Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy and the United States in Addis Ababa in the past week.

"I have to say that I believe they (representatives) have been impressed with what I have to say about Somaliland," Mr. Igal told Reuters in an interview.

The former British Somaliland united at independence in 1960 with the former Italian Somalia to create the Somalia republic.

Mr. Igal said that Somaliland, which broke away from Somalia in 1991, received no support from any country "but I hope that these envoys will report back the existence of Somaliland to their respective governments."

"Next time they are dispensing with aid, they may include the name of Somali land in the list," he said.

Mr. Igal said he had not paid his cabinet since he appointed it for a two-year interim period in May this year.

"We are bankrupt. No one from the president down to the janitor receives any salary. The only thing we receive is U.N. food-for-work grain which we are given from time to time."

He said the government of Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi had allowed him to use Addis Ababa for "diplomatic visibility."

"I have been given the freedom of the city. I can meet anybody I like here, it is a genuine offer," he said.

But Mr. Igal said he did not seek diplomatic recognition of Somaliland from Ethiopia or any other country at this stage.

"We will have to establish the rule of law and meet all the criterion needed for statehood first. We shall then be entitled to a recognition," he added, but did not elaborate.

Mr. Igal repeated his rejection of UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia II) plans to station up to 10,000 troops in Somaliland, which the U.N. calls Somalia's northern sector.

The UNOSOM II troops are stationed mainly in southern Somalia where they have restored a semblance of order.

Mr. Igal said Somaliland's secession from Somalia was "permanent and not negotiable."

"We told them (the U.N.) in a forceful manner that if they do send troops to Somaliland, we shall consider it as an invasion and fight against them to the last man," he said.

"The people of Somaliland are enjoying their newly found freedom and are very adamant to retain their status."

"Our split from Somalia is based not on animosity but on our disenchantment with the form of ethics and system of governance of the Somali republic," he said.

Northern Somalia was spared much of the anarchy after the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and the outbreak of clan-based violence.

Kenya expels Somalis

Kenyan authorities rounded up 1,336 Somali refugees and pushed them across the border into Somalia Saturday, a United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) statement said in Nairobi.

The round-up and expulsion of the refugees, most of whom were from a refugee site at the border town of Mandera, followed the hijacking on Friday of a relief vehicle into Somalia, the statement said.

Kenyan authorities rounded up 1,336 Somali refugees and pushed them across the border into Somalia Saturday, a United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) statement said in Nairobi.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Weizman fooled by soldier dressed in drag

TEL AVIV (AP) — Pardon me Mr. President, but that's no woman. In an official tour of the occupied West Bank Thursday, Israeli President Ezer Weizman approached an Arab woman cradling her baby in the heart of a village. After exchanging greetings, the swashbuckling ex-general learned it was an Israeli undercover soldier hiding behind the Palestinian garb, the domestic news agency Ibt reported. "I had to knock the baby's head," Weizman's tour included visiting the undercover squads operating out of the West Bank and towns and villages in the area. Dressing in drag has become an integral part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — soldiers do it to trap Palestinian fugitives, and fugitives do it to evade troops.

Greece, Israel to expand cooperation

ATHENS (AP) — Greece and Israel on Friday agreed to have regular contacts and to cooperate on issues including the economy, tourism and culture. Greece also agreed to help Israel improve ties with the European Community. Greek Foreign Affairs Under-Secretary Virginia Tsouderou and her Israeli counterpart, Yossi Beilin, signed a protocol providing for a joint committee to meet twice a year to discuss areas of cooperation. "In the last year, a new chapter has opened in relations between our two countries," said Mr. Beilin, the highest Israeli official to visit since Greece recognised Israel in 1990. "Today we regard Greece as a close friend, though for many years this was not so," he told a news conference. Greece, which has traditionally close ties with the Arab World, was the last member of the European Community to recognise Israel. Now Israel expects Greece to help improve its cooperation agreement with the EC after Greece takes over the community's six-month rotating presidency in January.

Israel and Mozambique to renew ties

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel and Mozambique will establish diplomatic relations in the coming weeks, Israeli Radio reported Friday. The report, which the foreign ministry would not confirm or deny, said that Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Gad Yacobi, and his Mozambican counterpart came to the agreement this week. Mozambique, which gained independence from Portugal in 1974, followed the policy of its communist allies in not recognising Israel. The collapse of the communist bloc since 1989 and the beginning of peace talks with the Arab World in 1991 has led some 40 nations to resume or establish ties with the Jewish state. Mozambique was plagued by civil warfare for 15 years until last October, and the economy of the southeast African nation remains one of the poorest in the world. By establishing ties with Israel, poor nations gain access to Israel's technical assistance as well as its arms industry and its close alliance with the United States.

French premier meets Moroccan King

RABAT (R) — French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur discussed Morocco's relations with the European Community and other topics in a meeting with King Hassan on Friday, an official French source said. The French source said a major topic in talks between Mr. Balladur and King Hassan at the palace in Rabat was Morocco's relations with the European Community. Exploratory talks have been completed prior to negotiating a new partnership with the EC. Billed as the next best thing to full membership of the EC, France has promised to support the partnership designed to lead eventually to a free trade zone. At a brief news conference at the end of a 22-hour official visit, Mr. Balladur said he also discussed with the king the situation in the Balkans, the Middle East peace process, Lebanon and the Western Sahara conflict.

Extremists set fire to Algerian town halls

ALGIERS (AP) — Arsonists hurling firebombs set fire to three town halls Friday, while gunmen killed three police officers in a pair of attacks. Authorities blamed Islamic extremists. Town halls in Medea, south of Algiers, and in the eastern communities of Emir Abdul Kader and Kaous were set alight, officials said. The assailants escaped. Details on damages and casualties were not available. A police station in the western city of Tlemcen was attacked with firebombs and automatic weapons fire. No one was injured. Meanwhile, two police officers were killed in an ambush in the Algiers neighbourhood of Eucalyptus, and another slain by gunmen on a bus in Blida, about 50 kilometres south of the capital. The deaths brought to 18 the number of police or soldiers killed since July 1 in attacks attributed to Islamic extremists fighting to overthrow the military-backed government.

2 suspected Sudanese coup plotters freed

KHARTOUM (R) — Two suspects in an alleged coup plot in Sudan have been freed by a committee investigating the incident, a Khartoum newspaper said Saturday. Abdul Rahman Ibrahim, head of the committee, was quoted by Al Sudan Al Hadith (Modern Sudan) as saying Attallah Ali Karamallah, 49, of Kerima in northern Sudan, and Mohammad Ali Hamid, 22, from Port Sudan, were found not to be involved in the plot. A week ago the committee released on bail three other suspects. The government said in May it had uncovered a plot to overthrow military leader Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Ali Bashir. It said at the time that 13 people had been arrested and had confessed.

57 dead in 2 road accidents in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Two road accidents in Turkey early Saturday left 57 dead and 34 injured, the Turkish news agency Anatolia and state television channel TRT1 reported. At least 49 people died and 33 were injured when two coaches collided Saturday at about 4:30 a.m. (0130 GMT) near Avanos, Nevsehir province, 300 kilometres southeast of the capital Ankara, TRT1 said. The crash happened when the driver of a passenger coach tried to overtake a vehicle on the Kayseri-Ankara road and collided head-on with another coach travelling in the opposite direction. In the second accident, eight people died and another was injured when a lorry collided with a car at 6:00 a.m. on the Saniurfi-Mardin road in southeastern Anatolia close to the Syrian border, Anatolia reported. The car passengers who died were members of the same family and the lorry driver was seriously hurt, the agency said. According to police statistics, 6,015 people died and 53,673 were injured on Turkish roads in 1992.

France should play greater role in Mideast, PLO says

THE HAGUE (AFP) — A senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative in Europe, Leila Shahid, has urged France to play a more active role in the Middle East, because the peace process is now at a "crucial stage."

Ms. Shahid, who was one of the first leading Palestinians to hold peace talks with Israeli politicians, is currently the PLO's representative in the Netherlands.

Ms. Shahid said that for the first time Arabs and Israelis were discussing a peace settlement which would ensure security for all the states in the region, and "very important progress has been made."

"We know the final status of Jerusalem cannot be fully resolved now, but clearly we are currently negotiating on all the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem," Ms. Shahid said.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was pursuing a policy of "one step forward, two steps back," Ms. Shahid said, and the Palestinians were experiencing "much more ferocious repression" than under the previous administration of Yitzhak Shamir.

The peace process launched in Madrid in October 1991 was now at a "crucial stage," Ms. Shahid said, because there was a danger of "total paralysis if we consider the present difficulties to be insurmountable."

Ms. Shahid, who is due to become the PLO's senior representative in Paris in a week's time, told AFP Friday that France could "play a greater role" in the Middle East and "can and should remind Israel of its responsibilities."

"France was the country of revolution, but today one gets the impression that this is being replaced by a realpolitik involving concessions with serious consequences for us," she said.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Reve d'enfants
17:40 Le Mondeca avois
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal de l'histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step By Step
21:10 The Trials of Life
22:30 News in English
22:30 French series

PRAYER TIMES
04:11 Fair
05:41 (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 Dhuhr
16:23 Asr
19:43 Maghrib
21:13 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swallow, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 62785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637480.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Assiut International Church Tel. 625236.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Normal summer weather will prevail and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly fresh and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 17 / 29
Aqaba 23 / 38
Desert 15 / 33
Jordan Valley 22 / 37

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 29, Aqaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 39 per cent, Aqaba 16 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Saoud Ali 780245
Dr. Walid Al Maari 675485
Dr. Khalid Mu'ade 743500
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shekha 724065
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 773336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Saloun pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

ERBD:
Dr. Ahmed Qanu (-)
Alqada pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Fawwaz Hamdallah 903644
Khalid pharmacy 858417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 643482
Traffic Police 890390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 771111
Amman Municipality 771111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdull Telephone Repairs 771111
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
Company 08-53200
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/322
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642811/6
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642811/6
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malbas, J. Amman 636410
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/79
The Islamic, Abdull 664164/6
Al-Ahl, Abdull 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muasher 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/90
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83333
Zarqa National Hospital (09)90560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)946732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)99090
ERBD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)5200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Bangkok (RJ)
05:35 Agila (RJ)
05:35 Damascus (RJ)
05:40 Jeddah (RJ)
05:45 Agila (RJ)
05:50 Beirut (RJ)
05:55 Tunis, Camblanca (RJ)
06:00 Rome (RJ)
06:05 Vienna (RJ)
06:10 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
06:15 Istanbul (RJ)
06:20 Athens (RJ)
06:25 Jeddah (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:35 Riyadh (RJ)
06:40 Jeddah (RJ)
06:45 Damascus (RJ)
06:50 Agila, Cairo (RJ)
06:55 New Delhi (RJ)
07:00 Jeddah (RJ)
07:05 Agila, Doha (RJ)
07:10 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
07:15 Bangkok (RJ)
07:20 Sanaa (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Beirut, Paris (RJ)
06:30 Madrid (RJ)
06:40 Agila (RJ)
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
06:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
06:55 Tunis, Camblanca (RJ)
07:00 Rome (RJ)
07:05 Vienna (RJ)
07:10 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
07:15 Istanbul (RJ)
07:20 Athens (RJ)
07:25 Jeddah (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
07:35 Riyadh (RJ)
07:40 Jeddah (RJ)
07:45 Damascus (RJ)
07:50 Agila, Cairo (RJ)
07:55 New Delhi (RJ)
08:00 Jeddah (RJ)
08:05 Agila, Doha (RJ)
08:10 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
08:15 Bangkok (RJ)
08:2

Turkish foreign minister to visit Jordan after 13-year lull in official visits

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin arrives here today (Sunday) on a three-day visit for talks on bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process, as well as the conflict in former Yugoslavia among other issues.

Mr. Cetin, who will be the first Turkish foreign minister to pay an official visit to Jordan in 13 years, will discuss "all issues of mutual concern and ways and means to expand Jordanian-Turkish cooperation," said the Turkish ambassador to Jordan, Mehmet Iremelik.

"These will include of course the peace process and regional developments and the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said.

Jordan and Turkey are in the forefront of Islamic countries de-

manding forceful international action to end the war in Bosnia pitting Muslims against Serbs and Croats in the aftermath of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, who is also foreign minister, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and Planning Minister Ziad Fariz will be holding talks with Mr. Cetin.

Mr. Cetin, who retained his portfolio in a government change in Ankara in mid-June, and scheduled to visit Amman June 22. But an upsurge in anti-Turkish violence in Europe by Kurdish rebels forced him to postpone the visit.

The ambassador said no new Jordanian-Turkish agreement was expected to be announced during Mr. Cetin's visit. The trip

will offer Mr. Cetin an opportunity "to exchange views with the Jordanian leadership on various issues — bilateral, regional and international," he said.

"Turkey and Jordan have an excellent relationship and we share identical views on many issues," Mr. Iremelik told the Jordan Times.

The two countries have several cooperation agreements, and Ankara is "very satisfied with the framework of accords, but would like to strengthen their implementation," the ambassador said.

The then Turkish foreign minister, visited Jordan in December 1980. Since then foreign ministers of the two countries have paid working visits to each other — including attendance at Organisation of Islamic Conference and regional meetings — but no official visits have been made after Taher Al Masri visited An-

ara in May 1991 in his capacity as foreign minister of Jordan.

Jordanian-Turkish trade has grown considerably in the past few years.

Jordan imported Turkish products worth JD 97.4 million in 1992, up from JD 57.14 million in 1991, JD 46.11 million in 1990 and JD 28.14 million in 1989.

Turkish imports from Jordan totalled JD 13.27 million in 1992, JD 13.07 million in 1991, JD 15.11 million in 1990 and JD 11.46 million in 1989.

Mr. Cetin will leave Jordan for Israel on Tuesday. He will be the first Turkish foreign minister to visit the Jewish state.

His talks in Israel will deal with the Middle East peace process and Turkish-Israeli relations and cooperation in tourism and other areas between the two countries, according to reports from An-

ara. Turkey supports the 21-month-old Arab-Israeli negotiations and is a participant in all the working groups of the multilateral phase of the American-Russian-sponsored peace process.

Ankara tried to host an international meeting with focus on Middle East water in November 1991, shortly after the Middle East peace process got off in Madrid in October, but Arab objections to sitting down with Israel before agreements were reached on political issues aborted the plans.

Turkey, which has abundant water resources, is expected to play a key role in any regional water-sharing arrangement. A dormant proposal is to build pipelines to ferry Turkish water down to the Gulf states through Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Educators seek to eradicate illiteracy

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab and Islamic worlds lack appropriate and international standards programmes for training teachers specialising in adult education and in the eradication of illiteracy, but the Ministry of Education in Jordan is now focusing on such programmes, Minister of Education Khaled Al Omari said Saturday.

"Our universities have been training school teachers in the traditional method, but it is hoped proper attention would now be directed towards adult education, the minister said in an address at the opening of a training seminar attended by delegates involved in adult education.

In the 10-day seminar the participants will discuss the concept and methods of eradicating illiteracy, Jordan's own related experiences and programmes, problems encountered in teaching illiterate adults, textbooks for illiterates, adult classes and preparing educational aids.

Adult education teachers are in need of special skills and training enabling them to deal with illiterates and attain positive results, said Dr. Omari.

This seminar, organised in cooperation with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) falls within the Jordanian educational development plans which aim at reducing illiteracy in the Kingdom to eight per cent by the end of the century, he added.

Dr. Omari thanked ISESCO for supporting the Kingdom's efforts in dealing with illiteracy. ISESCO representative Izzat Arab Katani reviewed at the opening session the organisation's programmes which, he said, include training of teachers to eradicate illiteracy in the Islamic world.

Ministry of Education representative Saoud Mahmoud said the rate of illiteracy in Jordan has dropped from 67.6 in 1961 to 15.5



Participants from the Arab and Islamic worlds Saturday attend the opening session of a 10-day seminar on eradicating illiteracy (Petra photo)

per cent this year.

Following the opening address, the minister opened an Islamic world's children's drawing exhibition organised by ISESCO. The four-day exhibition dis-

plays 54 paintings that have already been displayed in six Islamic nations.

Children with entries at the exhibition came from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan,

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, Qata, Kuwait, Libya, the Maldives, Morocco and Egypt.

The seminar is being held at the Teachers' Club in Amman.

Lebanon, Jordan agree to free some commodity restrictions

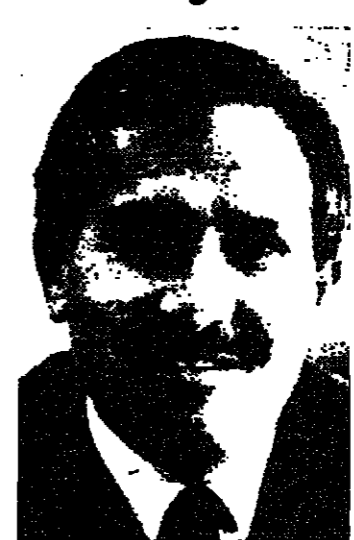
AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Lebanon have agreed to "free a number of commodities traded between them from financial and administrative restrictions and decided to exempt a list of Jordanian and Lebanese national products from customs duty," Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket announced Saturday.

Speaking upon returning from Beirut where he held talks on trade and economic cooperation with the Lebanese government, Dr. Saket said the decision was made in order to encourage imports and exports between Jordan and Lebanon.

Agreement was reached on organising a Jordanian trade fair in Lebanon and a Lebanese fair in Jordan, both designed to orient the public to each other's national products and further boost trade ties, said the minister who was accompanied by a team of officials.

During the visit, the minister exchanged with his Lebanese counterpart instruments of ratification of a trade agreement signed in Amman last October.

The agreement provides for an increase in the volume of exchanged goods between the two



Bassam Al Saket

countries.

In Beirut, Dr. Saket was received by Lebanon's president, Elias Hrawi, held talks with Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the ministers of industry, economy and trade, as well as with the speaker of Lebanon's parliament.

Lebanese officials welcomed Jordan's drive to re-establish solidarity among Arab countries as

well as Jordan's efforts for achieving trade and industrial integration among Arab states, the minister reported.

Dr. Saket said the Lebanese government is interested in increasing the volume of goods traded with Jordan rather than retaining the present balance of trade.

In light of current trends among nations of the world to form economic blocs, and in the absence of comprehensive Arab agreements on economic and trade cooperation, it has become necessary for Jordan and Lebanon to take steps towards bolstering their bilateral cooperation and removing obstacles to trade, noted the minister.

Meanwhile, a delegation representing the St. Joseph University of Beirut Saturday met Dr. Ahmad Hisban, ministry of higher education secretary general here and discussed education cooperation.

Dr. Hisban outlined the ministry's functions and responsibilities and discussed with the visitors Jordanian regulations for establishing the equivalence of certificates and degrees awarded by Lebanese universities.

Camp for young expatriates opens

AJLOUN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad Saturday opened the seventh camp for youth from Jordan living abroad, an annual event aimed at orienting the youngsters on Jordanian cultural and economic development and fostering and strengthening their ties with their homeland.

A hundred participants living in 20 Arab and foreign countries are participating in the camp activities organised by the Ministry of Youth.

Prince Ghazi, who deputised at the opening ceremony for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, toured sections of the camp located at Ajloun and listened to the young men's ideas and views.

Minister of Youth Abdullah Oweidat, who delivered an address at the ceremony, said Jordanians living abroad serve as ambassadors for their country, reflecting its good image and projecting its aspirations.

Dr. Oweidat said the participants in the week-long event will

places of interest.

The Ajloun district governor and local officials and individuals attended the ceremony at the camp.

Young women's camp starts for 5 days in Dibbin

Meanwhile, a group of 310 young women from Jordan and several Arab countries gathered at the permanent scout camp at Dibbin near Jerash Saturday to start a five-day scouting camp, the seventh of its kind to be organised in Jordan during the summers.

Coming in the wake of a similar camp for young male scouts which ended last week, the participants will get training in auto mechanics, plumbing, painting, handicrafts, music, drawing and painting, enter sports and recreational programmes and make visits to places of interest including archaeological sites and Jordanian development projects.

The gathering is more like a conference of young women involved in scouts activities with the aim of helping participants in-

teract in cultural, social and other activities and benefit from various experiences, said Minister of Education and Higher Education Khaled Al Omari at a ceremony formally opening the camp.

The scout movement serves to maintain close contacts among Arab youth and is considered as an integral part of the ongoing education process which caters to the social, mental and physical requirements of a person, the minister added.

The presence of participants from Arab and Islamic countries in the camp, he added, embodies the idea of unity among the nation.

Later the minister opened an exhibition organised by the participants, displaying paintings, photographs, handicrafts, embroidery and other items reflecting life in the participating countries.

The Ministry of Education, said Dr. Omari later, will continue to plan annual camp activities which, he said, are of great benefit to the youth of Jordan and other countries.

Workshop on managing industry projects to start

AMMAN (Petra) — Private and public sector representatives will have an opportunity to share experiences and acquire additional knowledge on modern management of industrial projects at a nine-day regional workshop that starts Monday in Amman.

The workshop will address the assessment, management and implementation of industrial projects and related consultancy services.

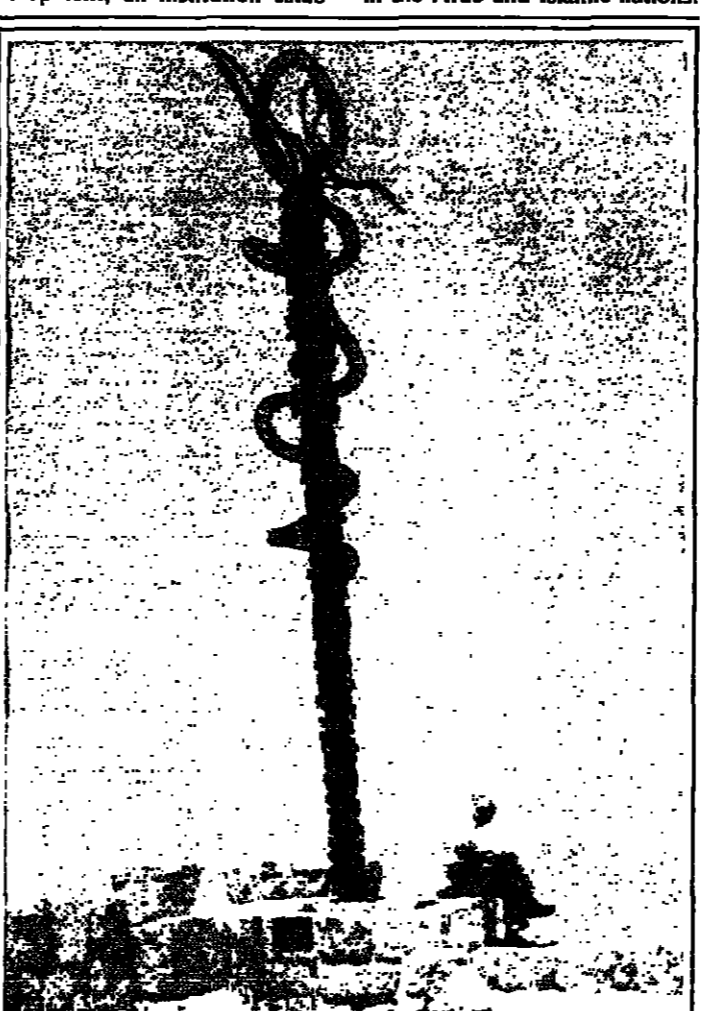
Twenty participants from Arab and Islamic countries including Jordan are taking part in the workshop which will be addressed by experts from France, Poland and Finland.

The workshop has been organised by the Higher Council for Science, Technology and Development, an institution estab-

lished by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

The delegates will deal with consultancy services related to: industrial projects, market analysis, gathering and analysing data related to market forces, production potentials, management of industrial projects, acquisition of production technology, elements of success in industrial investments, marketing operations and modern planning for industrial investment.

The participants invited to take part in the workshop are senior officials representing organisations concerned with investments in the Arab and Islamic nations.



A man enjoys a relaxing moment atop Mount Nebo overlooking the Jordan Valley and the West Bank (Staff photo by Aynsley Floyd)



SUDAN-JORDAN TRADE TIES: Minister of Trade and Industry Bassam Al Saket Saturday receives Sudanese Minister of Industry and Trade Tajul Sirr Mustafa who arrived in Amman at the head of an official delegation. Here on a several-day visit, Mr. Mustafa will hold talks with Jordanian officials on means of enhancing cooperation between the two countries in economic and commercial fields. (Petra photo).

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Sakhr Farzat at the Balka Art Gallery, Fuhels City.
- ★ Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at the Gallery, Hotel Jordan InterContinental.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Ali Al Mi'mar, Hazem Al Za'bi, Abdul Raouf Sham'oun and Jalal Urcigat at Eshebeila Art Gallery, 6th Circle, Amra Shopping Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Rana Dia and Mohammad

Kadoumi at the Royal Cultural Centre.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, entitled "Is There Any Hope of Settling Arab Disputes, and How?" by Dr. Yousef Al Hassan at 6:30 p.m. at Abdel Hameed Shoman Foundation.

JERASH FESTIVAL

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Galgamesh" at 8:30 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Ra'd visits Al Bal'awi family

IRBID (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid Saturday visited the family of the late Fawziyya Al Bal'awi whose family donated her corneas to Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid. Prince Ra'd conveyed to the family of the deceased the condolences of His Majesty King Hussein and his thanks for their humanitarian gesture. Prince Ra'd was accompanied on the visit by Irbid Governor Fayed Al Abbadi and director of the Irbid Police Department, Brigadier Hashem Al Qaisi.

Interior minister meets with Qatari envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Interior Salameh Hammad received at the ministry Saturday Qatari Ambassador to Jordan Nasser Abdul Aziz Al Nasser. The two discussed scopes of cooperation between Jordan and Qatar.

AYF to hold seminar on King Abdullah

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Youth Forum (AYF) Sunday will organise a seminar on the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Several scholars and intellectuals will participate in the seminar and will talk about the life, achievements and national stands of the late monarch.

Duchess of Kent opens archaeology exhibit

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent Saturday opened at the Royal Cultural Centre an exhibition of British archaeological projects in Jordan to celebrate the publication of a book entitled "Studies on Roman and Islamic Amman" by Alistair Northedge. The duchess delivered an address at the opening ceremony stressing that the exhibition reflects the continuation of the British historical interest in Jordan. The opening ceremony of the two-week exhibition was attended by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Yanal Hikmat, Director General of the Antiquities Department Safwan Tell, President of Al al Bait University Adnan Al Bakhit, senior officials, the director of the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History and the British ambassador to Jordan.

VTC to introduce new specialisations

EIN AL BASHA (Petra) — The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) has undertaken several arrangements to introduce new specialisations at the Vocational Training Centre in Ein Al Basha to help meet the needs of the local labour market and tackling unemployment among Jordanians. Centre Director Yousef Khanfar said the new specialisations include electronics, industrial knitting, leather works, bakery and confectionary works and hair dressing. The number of existing vocational specialisations at the centre already totals 17.

Save water every drop....counts!

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High school, low scorers

THE FAILURE of over 50 per cent of high school students to pass the General Certificate of Education, tawjihi, final exams is alarming. On Friday, the Ministry of Education announced that only 49.2 per cent of the tawjihi students passed the exam. Translated into figures that means that out of 73,242 students who sat for the exam around 37,000 students failed and have to either repeat the exam or live without a "certificate" and without any skill whatsoever. Out of the 35,000 who passed only around 15,000 will secure a university seat at any of the 10 universities here. That leaves another 20,000 who, though they have "the certificate" will have no skills. They, of course, are the ones who scored the lowest among those who passed. In all, 55,000 high school leavers join the workforce without any skills. Many will of course join community colleges, vocational training institutes or the army, as conscripts, and will subsequently be trained in different trades.

All these figures are alarming because they show how weak the educational system is, on the one hand, and because they add to the numbers of the unemployed, on the other. Although we have been aware of the educational reform process for the past 15 years, we fail to see any tangible result. It seems that either the educational system is unable to achieve more than 50 per cent of its goal, as evidenced by the failure rate or students are intentionally allowed to fail in order to stem the flow of high school graduates and the pressure on universities.

There have been numerous conferences, seminars, visiting experts, abroad-going officials on scholarships; all, it seems, to no avail. The failure of 35,000 students to pass the tawjihi is a great loss both in terms of time and funds. There must be something fundamentally wrong with all of this. Whether it is low funding, low paid teachers, the wrong curriculum, or an undirected educational process, something drastic must be done to rectify the situation. We cannot afford to continue to inject thousands of young people into the market without equipping them with the right education that would enable them to positively contribute to the future of society.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ISRAELI YESTERDAY massed troops and tanks along the border with Lebanon while Premier Yitzhak Rabin issued fresh threats against Lebanon and Syria, said Al Ra'i daily Saturday. Mr. Rabin said that the Israeli forces could launch an aggression on Lebanon any time now in retaliation for resistance attacks on Israeli positions over the past few weeks, added the daily. But, it said, this time Israel will not find its aggression unanswered since, beside the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance forces, it will be facing the Lebanese army and suffer heavy losses. Similar to its invasions of 1978 and 1982, Israel is bound to face defeat at the hands of the resistance forces and the internal turmoil on the domestic front, warned the paper. It said that the Lebanese armed forces and people will not remain passive and will defend their homeland if Israel chooses to wage another aggression on their country. Israel is threatening to wage another war on Lebanon not only in defiance of the world community and international rules but also in disregard of the peace process, continued the daily. By continuously talking about war and aggression, Israel is showing the world that it is not keen on achieving a lasting peace with its Arab neighbours, added the paper. It said that by launching a new aggression, Israel is endangering the peace of the whole region.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour Saturday criticised the ongoing executions in Egypt, noting that violence and violent actions can only beget violence and revenge. Experience in "various countries has proved that only through peaceful dialogue and discussion of the true causes of violence can a country live in peace and that executions and bloodshed can only draw more bloodshed and acts of revenge, said Saleh Al Qallab. By starting the executions, the Egyptian authorities have now opened a door which they will find almost impossible to close, he said. The writer said that the Egyptians are not used to executions, and the life sentences passed by the courts on the extremists are bound to backfire and stir sympathy in the hearts of most Egyptians for those condemned to death. Egypt and the Egyptian people are known to be tolerant and religious and it would have been wiser if the Egyptian authorities had dealt with the underlying causes of violence peacefully instead of dealing with them in violently, the writer said. He said that it would be better for the Egyptian authorities to try to deal with the domestic issues without any foreign influence.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Peace dividend — reality or myth

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

The peace process was set in motion 22 months ago without tangible results, yet the expectations regarding the outcome vary a lot. Some observers think that the peace process is going nowhere and will fade away and die with time because Israel is not interested in real peace. Other observers think that a final settlement has already been worked out and that every party is trying to get one last bit more in its favour before the signing ceremony.

At best, the final outcome of the several rounds of negotiations is still in doubt, and thus peace will not be taken for granted until it actually happens. More uncertain are the economic consequences of peace if and when it happened.

Common sense suggests that a major alteration of the Arab-Israeli status quo will bring with it risks and rewards, losses and gains. The problem is that some analysts do not see except the risks and losses, while others see only rewards and gains. Both parties tend to exaggerate the possible outcome. They predict either complete collapse of the Jordanian economy under the impact of unfair competition from a heavily subsidised Israeli economy or a great prosperity due to a flow of foreign aid and investments.

So far, intellectuals and politicised activists are mostly on the pessimistic side, while the investors and businessmen in the private sector are on the optimistic side.

The pessimists point out the capacity of the Israeli economy to overwhelm the Jordanian market and crowd out most Jordanian infant industries, while the speculators in Amman stock-exchange pushed prices of shares up beyond reason, on the understanding that the forthcoming peace will allow Jordanian companies to prosper.

There are of course no good reasons to back either line of thinking. The Israeli industry is not terribly efficient and competitive. It will continue to be westward oriented, having its

established and dependable markets in Europe and the United States. Foreign investments will be very slow. Except for tourism-related activities, there is very little to expect.

As far as the Jordanian economy is concerned, much depends on the vision and imagination of the negotiators. The peace formula may entail grave risks if it means a free trade zone, a customs union, a common market or any other form of discrimination in favour of Israel. While the risks will be minimal, if peace converts Israel to an ordinary country with normal trade relations in line with those we maintain with other foreign countries like Turkey, Cyprus, or Greece.

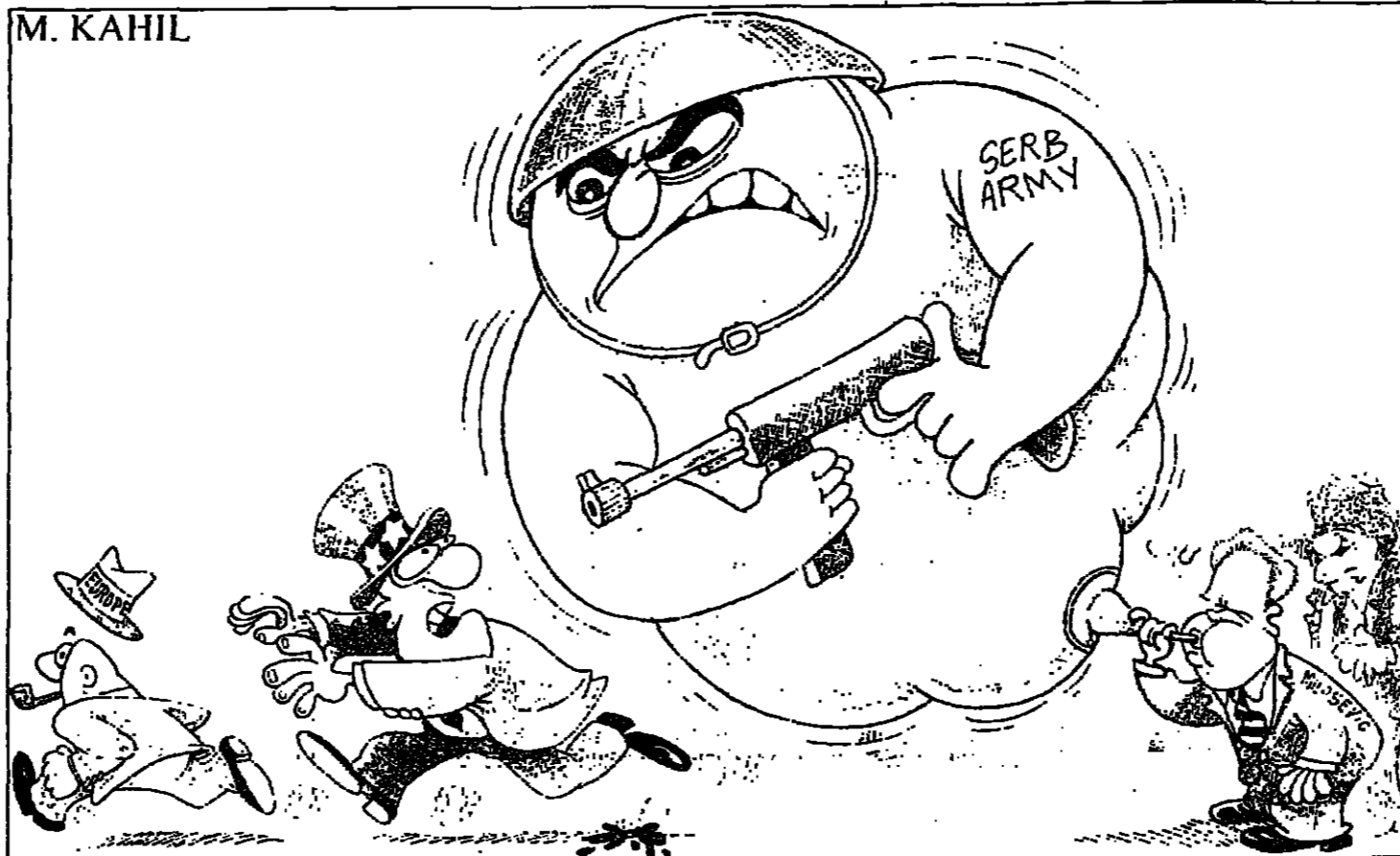
The report issued recently by a Harvard University Institute was a dangerous sign. Its recommendations would be a prescription for disaster to the Jordanian economy. It tried to give Israel much more than it was always after — normalisation of economic relations with its Arab neighbours, which we should be ready to implement if and when Israel is ready to withdraw from all Arab lands occupied in June 1967, and to recognise the Palestinian people's national rights.

The crucial factor which will determine whether peaceful settlement will mean prosperity or disaster is whether the peace accords will produce a normal Israel or a dominating and favoured Israel.

The Harvard report should be an eye opener. Our position should be very clear: Normalisation is possible only after an acceptable peaceful settlement is reached and normalisation should not mean more than treating Israel as an ordinary Middle Eastern country. Israel should not expect privileges over those practiced in inter-Arab trade and economic relations, as the misguided Harvard report advocated.

It goes without saying that we are for peace, but not any peace, at any price.

M. KAHIL



U.S., Europe hit for Bosnian failure

By Arthur Spiegelman
Reuter

NEW YORK — Is the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo close to collapse, bringing down with it hopes of a peaceful new world order, and if so, who is to blame — small-time Balkan nationalists, Europe at large or the world's only remaining superpower?

Grim news have filtered in of Serbian advances in the mountain battlefield above Sarajevo, putting peace talks at risk in Geneva while the Clinton administration hovered on the sidelines, pointing fingers at Europe and saying it could no longer help the Bosnians.

The day's events prompted such pessimism that U.S. foreign policy experts began debating just how long Sarajevo could hold out — days, weeks or months — and renewed the already bitter argument of just how much Washington and Europe were to blame.

Experts at one Washington think tank, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, spent the morning analysing what might be the next step — a U.N. protected evacuation of Sarajevo now in the 16th month of a siege.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Weisel, who tried to get warring Balkan leaders together last year, compared what was happening to

Britain and France caving in to Hitler over his dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

"If the powers want to save Sarajevo, they can... instead, Europe is blaming the United States, the United States is blaming Europe and people are dying. There is a moral failure somewhere. Here is a nation being abandoned and sacrificed."

"If the powers want to save Sarajevo, they can... instead, Europe is blaming the United States, the United States is blaming Europe and people are dying. There is a moral failure somewhere. Here is a nation being abandoned and sacrificed."

In Washington, President Bill Clinton tried on Thursday to soften the sour taste left by comments made a day earlier by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who said there was nothing more the United States could do. The president insisted the United States was still trying to secure a peace.

But the words rang hollow for many experts. Former Carter administration National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski said, "I think frankly that it is a shameful spectacle to see the secretary of

state publicly washing his hands while Sarajevo is about to fall. This will be a moral and geopolitical setback for the West and it reflects the failure of leadership in Europe in the first instance and the United States in the second."

He added, "I am profoundly embarrassed as an American. What is happening now makes a mockery now of the slogan 'never

with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, says it may be only a matter of days before the Serbians overrun the Bosnian military command headquarters on Mount Igman overlooking Sarajevo and then make it even harder for the Bosnians to fight."

"What little central coordination they have will be lost. Then the Serbs will strengthen their hold on the southwestern suburbs of the city and that may close this chapter of the war because this will force the Bosnian Muslims to accept a peace plan. They will have no choice but surrender," he said.

He and other experts say the Serbs won't even have to enter Sarajevo because their position will be so commanding that they can wait for winter to do the rest. But he warned that a Serb victory in Bosnia would only push the Serbians to further war in Croatia and then Kosovo and Macedonia where 300 American troops have been dispatched.

"The Serbs will be able to do what they want. That is going to be the lesson of Bosnia and that is I fear for a lot of people because if we don't do something in the former Yugoslavia, we will be setting a pattern for tensions in other parts of the world," Mr. Palaschak said.

"We could be looking at 20 years of nationalist wars of liberation. This is not going to be a bright period in world history."

LETTERS

Cruel murders

To the Editor:

With reference to the news and photograph printed in Saturday's edition of the Jordan Times (July 24, 1993), regarding the murder of children in Rio de Janeiro, I wish to bring to your attention a statement by Mr. Itamar Franco, president of Brazil, regarding that most unfortunate incident. In the statement, the president said:

"As a father, as a citizen, and as the president of the republic, I am horrified by what happened in Rio de Janeiro."

The minister of justice has been instructed to follow very closely the work of the Rio de Janeiro police, so as to identify and deliver to the judiciary the sordid murderers of children."

Fernando Silva Alves,
Ambassador,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Intolerance embedded in the Western approach to Mideast

By Peter R. Allen-Frost

ONE VIEWER of CNN who followed the Waco Texas saga wrote in to the network to state that the whole incident showed just how intolerant the United States was of religious eccentricities. That was not the only such point raised by concerned Americans. While one can argue as to just how eccentricity becomes downright dangerous, the Waco Saga started some thoughts rolling.

"It was typically American from start to finish," remarked one correspondent for a major American news organisation. "The Messianic fervour of the Waco group, the feeling that this threatened the fabric of American society." (While not approving of weapons caches or child abuse he might well have a point). He feels that Americans (U.S. residents that is) are significantly less tolerant of eccentrics than the non-U.S. world might suppose, an argument I have heard before usually from persons whose way of life is not "mainstream America" or who are decidedly not "politically correct."

"My God, Peter, how can you say we do not tolerate eccentrics? I'm from California and look at the wackos we have there!" exclaimed another U.S. correspondent. To which I replied that some argument might cynically be made that California was: a) Not part of the U.S., b) not part of the American mainstream or c) a place mainstream America might like to obliterate anyway.

Which triggered another train of thought. When America (let's use that name even though I mean pre-statehood U.S. of A.) was in diapers, back when the Pilgrim Fathers landed, the Puritans were propagating their own "Myth of Mission". As the Waco Davidians believed they were chosen by God for a mission, so did the Puritans. And it is a train of thought which has permeated down the centuries and is echoed in modern American speech, thought, custom and politics, despite the "melting pot" of America (which also seems to be a misnomer). The Puritans were distinctly intolerant of non-Puritans and were not above killing them or capturing them for sale as slaves, as a letter from legendary Cotton Mather states quite clearly. It is worthwhile reproducing the complete letter:

Cotton Mather to John Higginson, dated A.D. 1682:

There be now at seas a ship called Welcome (an ironic choice of name I would say) which has on board 100 or more of the heretics and malignants called "Quakers" with W. Penn, who is the chief scamp, at the head of them. The General Court has accordingly given sacred orders to Master Malachi Huscott, of the brig Porpoise, to waylay the said Welcome slyly and near the Cape of Cod as may be, and make captive the said Penn and his ungodly crew, so that the Lord may be glorified and not mocked on the soil of this new country with the heathen worship of these people. Much spoil can be made by selling the whole lot to Barbados, where slaves fetch good prices in rum and sugar and we shall not only do the Lord great good by punishing the wicked, but we shall make great good for His Minister and people.

Your in the bowels of Christ,
Cotton Mather.

In another instance, the Puritans wanted to erase a neighbouring Christian colony because they spoke German and not English. Which, considering they were Germans, was quite logical.

The Puritan thinking was in effect one of the Waco sect, a Biblical thought that "whosoever is not with us is against us." In modern terms, that could be construed as that which is non-American is un-American.

This presents some problems since most of the world is non-American, although growing sections are dependent upon American financial largesse and many sections would like to be American.

The American approach to African politics was one topic I discussed last year with a senior official of the government of Kenya. He recalled how his country needed some American financial help and how the American ambassador to Nairobi had approached the president and told him in no uncertain terms that the help was unlikely to be forthcoming unless the country adopted a democratic political system.

"You know," the American ambassador reportedly said, "you must have a two party system of elections."

"But we are a non-party society," the president reportedly responded. "I cannot go out and start an opposition party. My own standing will be immensely weakened."

"You want aid, you need an opposition," the ambassador allegedly replied.

So at the last elections Kenya fielded an opposition. It lost. The British had a similar approach to global politics, they insisted that Third World countries, to use the non-politically correct term, must have parliaments and prime ministers. To conform to this British peculiarity, and under British pressure, some local rulers in the British Empire installed parliaments. "Ah," breathed Britannia, "democracy in action."

Really? The belief that the native actually understands English but stubbornly refuses to speak it and thus has to be shouted at, is inherent in English speaking colonisation, but such peculiarities as the inability to grasp that not all the world dances to a civilised beat (you define civilised) is the real White Man's burden.

Prior to his invasion of Egypt Napoleon Buonaparte procured an Arabic language typewriter, typesetters and Arabic-French interpreters (Middle Eastern Christians who happened to be in Rome were "recruited"). Their task was to prepare documents for distribution to the Egyptians. The general seemed convinced that once the Egyptians read the documents they would accept the French with open arms and upon his demand pay taxes to support his invasion. The first document made a proclamation on behalf of the principles of liberty and equality.

"It is a train of thought which has permeated down the centuries and is echoed in modern American speech, thought, custom and politics, despite the 'melting pot' of America."

Unfortunately for Napoleon, as British scholar Professor Bernard Lewis said in a lecture two years ago, Napoleon's problem was not really one of translating from one language to another, which would have been relatively simple. It was a problem of translating from one culture to another, from modern end-of-the-18th-century western Europe to an Islamic World still almost untouched by even the beginnings of westernisation, certainly much less in Egypt than in Turkey, and to use a language — namely Arabic — which had not previously been called upon to express a whole series of notions which, by the time of the French Revolution, were already commonplace in French and other languages of western Europe founded on the Principles of Liberty and Equality and Fraternity.

The Egyptians did not rush to take advantage of the newly-won glories and freedoms of the French revolutionaries even though Napoleon invoked the name of Allah and Prophet Mohammed in his document. They saw through the inconsistent translations and terminology described by one contemporary historian, Abdul Rahman Al Jabarti Al Misri, (1798) as "incoherent words and vulgar constructions (in a) miserable letter."

Has the western world moved forward any significant amount since then?

Are western societies still convinced that all natives really do speak English and have to be shouted at to make them quit their annoyingly stubborn habit of refusing to understand?

While the Puritan mission might be denied in this modern era, Cotton Mather's intolerance and Napoleon's incomprehension appear to be very much with us, most certainly as in western approaches to the Middle East.

The writer is a veteran radio correspondent for ABC News specialising in Middle Eastern affairs. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Tutankhamun interred in second-hand sarcophagus

By David Keys

TUTANKHAMUN, the Egyptian boy king buried in golden splendour, was interred in a second-hand "coffin" intended for his predecessor, research has revealed.

A study of his last resting place — a four-tonne sarcophagus — shows that the great stone box had been built 10 years before the boy king's death. Masons had amended its inscriptions and carvings for Tutankhamun's burial.

Archaeological investigations by Marianne Eaton-Krauss, an American Egyptologist, suggest that the sarcophagus had originally been made for Neferneferuaten, Tutankhamun's older half-sister. The research also suggests that Neferneferuaten was never buried in it because of political and religious upheaval in Egypt in the 14th century B.C.

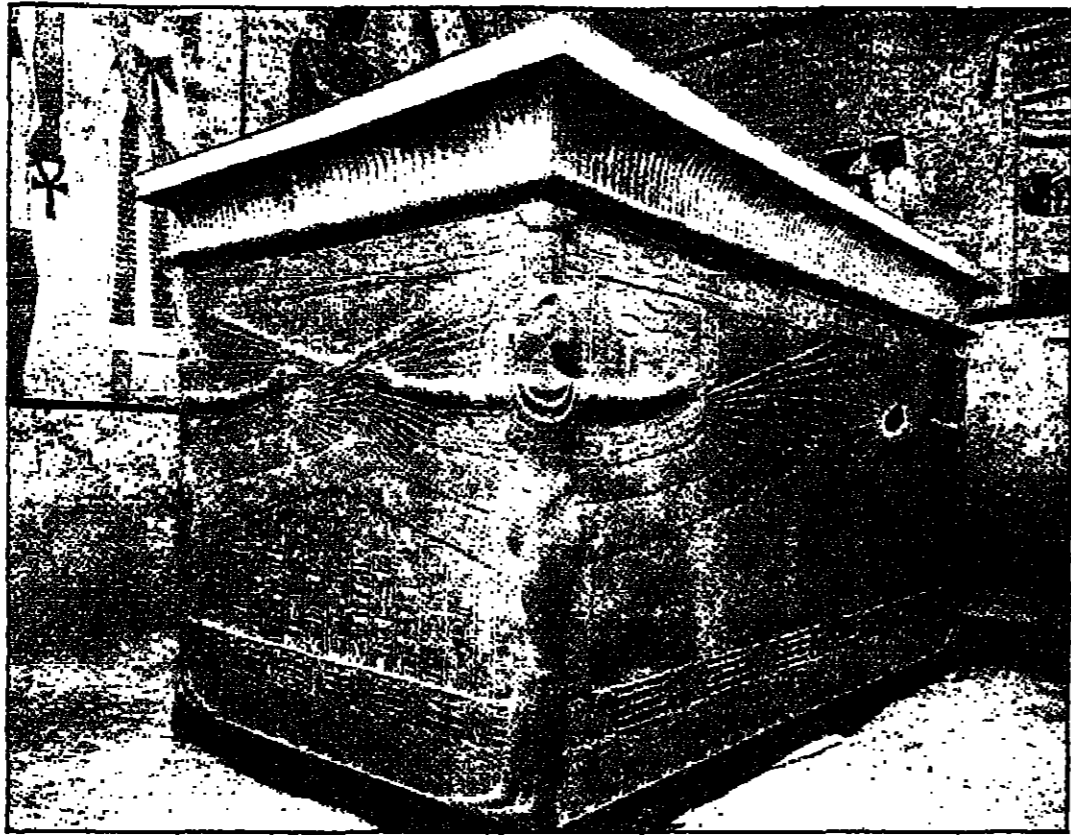
Dr. Eaton-Krauss concluded that Tutankhamun's sarcophagus was, in effect, a "retread" after she discovered very faint remains of deliberately obliterated hieroglyphic inscriptions on its stone sides.

Further detailed examination also found that the beautiful figures at each corner of the box had originally been carved without wings. But in the 70 years since Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon discovered Tutankhamun's tomb, no one had noticed either the faint traces of the earlier inscriptions or the fact that the wings had been added.

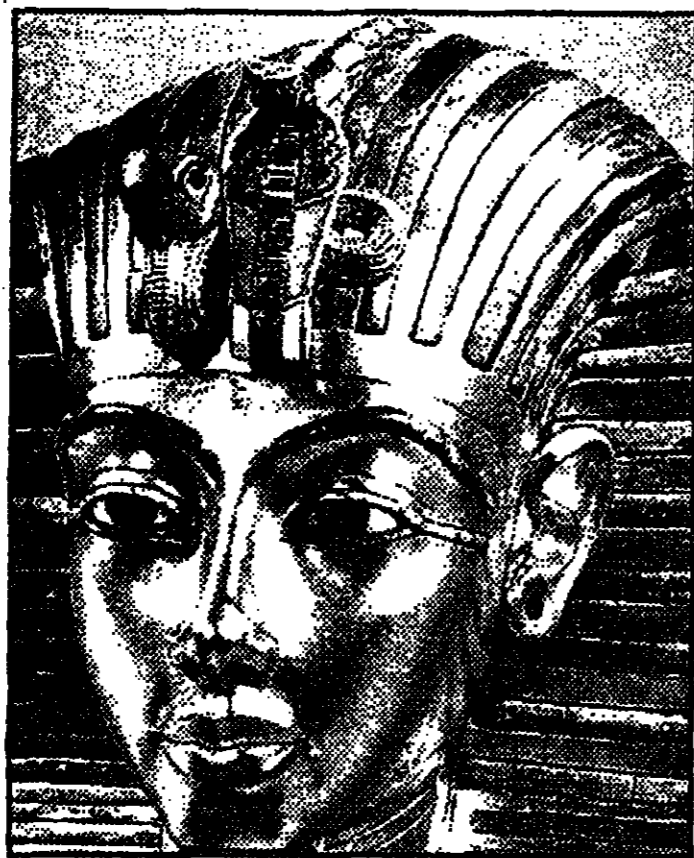
In order to obliterate the hieroglyphic texts, Egyptian masons had removed about 3mm of stone from most of the sarcophagus exterior. The contents of these now long-vanished texts may have convinced the authorities at the time that their late pharaoh could not be buried in his own sarcophagus.

It appears that the great stone box was mortalled until Tutankhamun's death in 1323 B.C. — when he was aged between 15 and 20 — when it was redesigned for its new role. Neferneferuaten (often known as Smenkhkare) was an elder son of the so-called heretic pharaoh, Akhenaten.

Dr. Eaton-Krauss's revelation, published by the Griffith Institute, which holds all the original photographs and records of the tomb, sheds a new light on the events which followed the collapse of Akhenaten's heresy.



The ornate sarcophagus, built for Tutankhamun's predecessor, Neferneferuaten, who was not buried in it because of father's heresy



Tutankhamun's gold mask

Overworked elephants find refuge

By Sutin Wannabovorn
Reporter

PANG-LA, Thailand — Elephants were once revered in Thailand, symbols of prosperity and good luck. Now they are being drugged, tortured and forced to work long hours in an illegal trade that often leaves them maimed for life.

Phae took two hours to trudge the two-kilometre to get to this self-styled elephant hospital and rehabilitation centre, her spinal cord cracked from heavy timber loads she has been forced to drag for illegal loggers.

Doie, whose back leg was broken when the logs she was dragging fell on it, took twice as long to make the same trip.

Phae and Doie are among 20 elephants at the centre which

have been disabled by overwork and mistreatment. Dr. Preecha Pongkam, a veterinarian and chief of the hospital in Ngao district of Lampang province, says many will never recover.

"We have learned that the illegal loggers are torturing the animals by drugging them with amphetamines and forcing them to work too hard," said Dr. Preecha, who is also chairman of the state-run Thai Elephant Conservation Centre.

"The attitude of the people towards elephants has changed," said Richard Lair, an American working with the Thai Elephant Conservation Centre who has researched the animal for 15 years.

"In the past the elephant was a member of the family of the owner, they loved it because it brought luck and prosperity to their family. But these days many investors just buy elephants to work illegally. Elephant owners are no longer elephant lovers," he said.

The change in attitude appears to have followed changes in rules regulating the logging of precious hardwoods from Thailand's tropical forests. In 1989, the government revoked logging concessions and an illegal trade began to flourish.

This meant working through

the night to avoid detection.

A mahout, or elephant tender, who was familiar with the illegal business estimated about 500 of Thailand's 3,000 or so domesticated elephants are being forced to work at night with logging syndicates in the northern Thai provinces of Lamphang, Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Tak near the Burma and Laos borders.

The mahout said the loggers put amphetamines in the elephants' sticky rice or tamarind fruit to keep them awake.

At least 164 elephants confiscated from illegal logging operations in the past four years have been treated at the jungle rehabilitation centre. One in eight of them died, Dr. Preecha said.

The centre also cares for 80 elephants who used to work with the state-run forest industry organisation and are now trained to show to tourists, he said.

"The future of the Thai elephant is in danger. We have even found that a trend of elephant owners abandoning their useless and overworked elephants is on the rise," Dr. Preecha said.

"When the animal becomes a burden the owners will abandon them and this place is the only centre in the country to bear their future suffering."

Arafat calls for Arab summit

(Continued from page 1)

outlawed for years.

On Wednesday, a top aide to Mr. Arafat said the PLO and Israel were on the verge of direct talks and that high-level discussions between them had already taken place in Italy and the United States.

Following the lifting of an Israeli ban on contacts with the PLO in January, "all that remains is for (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin to publicly lift his ban on the senior leadership of the PLO," said Nabil Shaath.

Ms. Dayan, who met Mr. Arafat last January shortly after Israel lifted the ban, had said she would try to set up a meeting between other Israeli members of parliament and PLO officials to further the peace process.

Mr. Rabin said he disapproved of the initiative but did nothing to try to block it, Israeli MPs said.

Seven Labour Party ministers and four from Mr. Rabin's left-wing coalition partner Meretz, part of a cabinet of 18 members, back direct peace talks with the PLO, according to Labour MP Hagai Meron.

Immigration — an old argument, never settled, flares anew

by Mike Feinsilber
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America, proud of its open door and melting pot traditions but wary of foreigners and their alien ways, has always felt ambivalent about immigration.

The mood was encapsulated in the saga of three ships trying to smuggle 659 Chinese into California this month. It appeared that U.S. authorities didn't want the Chinese passengers to perish — or to enter.

Even Benjamin Franklin in the 18th century worried about invading hordes — Germans, in his instance. "Instead of learning our language, we must learn theirs, or live as in a foreign country," Mr. Franklin grumbled.

The outcry against illegal immigrants — accused of taking jobs from the native-born and planting bombs in the country's landmarks — has become an uproar.

But even legal immigrants, those who qualify for legal residence, are running into a less-than-cordial welcome. In one poll, 49 per cent of Americans wanted to slow down immigration; another 27 per cent said they'd stop it altogether.

"Americans are very moved by the words on the Statue of Liberty," says Senator Alan Simpson, a Republican. "Then you ask them what about people coming here that don't embrace our pluralistic society; they vote (in polls) 60 to 65 per cent against that."

A study by economist Donald Huddle of Rice University offers anti-immigration ammunition. He calculates that immigrants cost local, state and federal governments \$45 billion more last year than the taxes they paid. He tallied up medical benefits, public and college education costs and unemployment aid for workers who lost their jobs to immigrants.

Another expert, Elliot Barkan of California State University, says such estimates ignore the contribution made by immigrants. U.S. hospitals could barely function without imported Filipino nurses, he says, fruits and vegetables would cost twice as much if aliens weren't on hand to

pick them. Would California's laid-off aerospace workers take those field jobs, he asks.

Ben Wattenberg, a social commentator at the Conservative American Enterprise Institute, argues that immigrants enrich America.

"You bring in another million people and they have to buy lawn seed, they go to baseball games, they have their cars repaired," says Mr. Wattenberg. "What creates jobs? People create jobs."

Today, the grumbling is echoed by the immigration-wary Centre for Immigration Studies. "The demographic transformation of American society," it says, "is occurring without the consultation or consent of the American people."

The new wave of hostility is easy to explain: Persistent unem-

ployment, especially in places where immigrants flock, and a change in the immigration mix (fewer people whose skins are white; more whose skins are yellow, brown or black) arouse resentment.

And outrage is provoked by half a dozen notorious events. The illegal Pakistani immigrant accused of shooting CIA employees as they went to work. The Arab bombers of New York's World Trade Centre. The high-paid smugglers who dumped 300 Chinese immigrants onto New York's shores. The Haitians who are being made prisoners on their own island by a U.S. Navy flotilla.

Immigrant resentment knows no borders and is likely to build. A United Nations report says war, poverty, overcrowding and

erosion are compelling more people to leave their homelands than at any time in history, laying the ground for what could become "the human crisis of our age."

Immigrants are coming to the United States at rates approaching those of the great waves of the European migration at the start of the century. But the country is four times larger than it was in 1900.

America gets perhaps a million newcomers every year. Seven in 10 are legal. Some of them are refugees, some applicants for political asylum. And, surprisingly, a government study suggests that about three out of 10 immigrants pack up and go home.

Many Americans don't distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. Most legal immigrants quietly join the family members already there and take their place in American society. In 1990 Congress passed legislation to make a place for 140,000 highly-skilled workers and their families whose talents were needed by U.S. society.

It is the news made by illegal immigrants — from smuggled indentured servant to Islamic terrorist — that has generated so much antagonism.

Bills introduced in Congress would use the army to guard the border, tie immigration levels to the unemployment rate, amend the constitution to deny automatic citizenship to anyone born in this country and cut off federal benefits to localities which shelter illegal aliens.

Officially, the government still sees legal immigration as a plus.

The Labour Department said a few years ago, in determining how many people to admit, that policymakers "should proceed from the knowledge that... The U.S. has done well by doing good," former President George Bush's economic advisers found that immigration increased "the aggregate income of the native-born population."

But those assumptions are under challenge.

Immigration numbers

Since the end of World War II, more than 25 million immigrants have come to the United States. Immigration from Latin America and Asia now accounts for more than 90 per cent of all immigration.

About eight per cent of the people in America are foreign-born (or ex-immigrants). In 1960, it was six per cent. In 1920, it was more than 13 per cent.

But they're unevenly distributed. The foreign-born constitute 22 per cent of the population of California, 16 per cent of New York's, 15 per cent of Hawaii's, 13 per cent of Florida's and New Jersey's, 9 per cent of the people of Texas, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. But in South Dakota, Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas and Kentucky, only about one person in 100 came from abroad.

Most new immigrants settle in six areas — New York City, northern New Jersey, the Los Angeles area, Chicago, Miami and the border areas of Texas.

The 1990 census found that 22 per cent of America's immigrants came from Europe, 25 per cent from Asia, 26 per cent from Central America (four in five of them from Mexico), four per cent from Canada, nine per cent from the Caribbean, five per cent from South America, two per cent from Africa.

Throughout this century, immigrants averaged about 500,000 a year, with peaks at the beginning and end of the century and valleys in the middle. In the hard times of the 1930s, more people emigrated from America than immigrated in.

In 1990, according to the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, the United States received about 61,000 legal immigrants from Mexico, 14,000 from Canada, 24,000 from Vietnam, 55,000 from India, 55,000 from the Philippines, 12,000 from El Salvador, 18,000 from Korea, 43,000 from the former Soviet Union.

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Project: Potassium Sulphate
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Jordan Investment Corporation of Amman, Jordan, together with other industrial & financial Jordanian firms intend to implement a chemical complex to produce dicalcium phosphate (DCP) & potassium sulphate (SOP) in Jordan. The first phase of the required work will be to conduct a detailed techno-economic feasibility study for the production of both (DCP & SOP) in one complex at Aqaba, Jordan, at a capacity of (75) thousand tonnes SOP fertiliser grade & (50) thousand tonnes of DCP; and to recommend an implementation scheme of the project based on the selected technology, since a techno-feasibility study was recently prepared based on chisso (Modified Mannheim) process, and to be tied in with (DCP) plant. The work required shall cover the following:

Phase I- Techno-economic feasibility study as follows:-

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- Jordan Investment Corporation

P.O.Box 3294

Amman - Jordan

Fax No.: 962 6 816915

F.A.D.: Eng. M. Saudi

Projects Manager

Jordan Investment Corporation

Act. Managing Director

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The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Tuesday 17.8.93, application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD 150 for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting tenders is 12:00 hours local time Tuesday Aug. 24, 1993.

Thabet Al Taher
Managing Director

Warring parties in Bosnia agree to halt offensives

SARAJEVO (R) — The three warring parties in Bosnia's 16-month civil war were reported Saturday to have agreed to halt their offensives from Sunday, opening the way for a possible resumption of peace talks next week.

The new commander of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, General Francis Brigueumont, told a news conference that Serb forces besieging Sarajevo and Croat troops fighting Muslim-led government troops elsewhere had agreed to halt their actions from 10 a.m. (0800 GMT) Sunday.

Gen. Brigueumont declined to describe the accord as a ceasefire calling it rather a "cease offensives" — because he could not guarantee that regional armed factions would not break it, as has happened frequently in the past.

However, he said he had received pledges from rival Serb, Muslim and Croat commanders to halt formal offensives in the former Yugoslav republic.

From Sunday at 10 a.m. (0800 GMT) all parties have accepted to cease all offensive operations," the Belgian officer said. "It is impossible to control the action of all soldiers everywhere so the term 'cease offensives' is a better term than 'ceasefire'."

The agreement was announced after Serb gunners perched in mountains overlooking Sarajevo shelled parts of the beleaguered city for the third day running. The bombardment has so far killed 16 people and injured nearly 90.

The accord appeared to pave the way for the resumption of peace talks in Geneva next Tuesday, which Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic had refused to attend while Sarajevo and Muslim areas were under attack.

Mr. Izetbegovic had twice asked for postponements in the talks, originally scheduled for last Friday.

On Saturday international mediators agreed to postpone the talks until Tuesday, which according to government-controlled Bosnian radio had been requested by Mr. Izetbegovic to enable water and other services to be restored and blocked aid convoys to be released.

A spokesman for the mediators said in Geneva: "We have a very specific agreement from President Izetbegovic that talks should begin Tuesday morning and that he himself plans to leave Sarajevo on Monday afternoon."

Gen. Brigueumont said he brokered the accord in meetings with

rebel Serb commander General Ratko Mladic Friday. Mr. Izetbegovic early Saturday, and top Croat officers.

Mr. Izetbegovic had asked that the U.N. Protection Force supervise implementation of the agreement in Sarajevo and other major battle zones like Mostar, Brcko and Maglaj.

Gen. Brigueumont said he would also immediately request about 2,000 more peacekeeping troops to provide unhindered access for U.N. relief convoys to more than 1.5 million displaced people.

In Brcko itself, which is in northern Bosnia, Bosnian radio reported that fierce fighting was going on.

Earlier in the day a U.N. helicopter ferrying two wounded Canadian U.N. soldiers to hospital came under fire as it was landing at Visoko, just outside Sarajevo, but was not hit, a U.N. spokesman in Zagreb said.

The Canadians were injured when their observation post outside the Muslim town of Srebrenica, a U.N.-designated "safe area", was hit by mortar fire Friday. The soldiers were injured in the legs, one seriously.

In Geneva the spokesman for mediators Lord Owen and Thor-

vald Stoltenberg, John Mills, said that both Mr. Izetbegovic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic had agreed that talks involving all parties in the war should begin Tuesday.

This appeared to make a change of heart for Mr. Karadzic, who only the previous day had written to the mediators advising that early peace talks would be pointless since Mr. Izetbegovic had ruled out a Serb-Croat plan for three-way partition of Bosnia along ethnic lines.

In a letter to Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg, Mr. Karadzic said the meeting could be "pre-emptive and counter-productive."

The talks would "unavoidably encourage greater military activity on all sides", said Mr. Karadzic, whose forces control 70 per cent of Bosnia.

"Mr. Izetbegovic has no intention of reaching settlement acceptable to Serbs and Croats," Mr. Karadzic said, adding that anything that the Muslim president signed would be overruled when he returned to Sarajevo.

The Bosnian Serb leader proposed that the mediators organise a well-prepared summit meeting in several months' time instead of what he called a "pseudo summit" in Geneva.

Major bloodied in victory; leadership questioned

LONDON (R) — Opponents of John Major said Saturday the British prime minister's authority was dented and his leadership in question despite victory in a confidence vote and parliament's approval of the Maastricht Treaty.

Mr. Major brought anti-European rebels in his Conservative Party to heel Friday by threatening to call an election if his goal of closer ties with Europe was denied, but critics said this dramatic move showed the precariousness of his position.

"Major's victory fails to end leadership doubts," said a headline in the authoritative Financial Times. The best-selling daily Sun tabloid headlined its editorial: "A nice guy but he's got to go."

But Mr. Major's success in "lancing the boil" over Europe delighted his cabinet, which said the acrimonious debate had been won, allowing the government to move on to a domestic political agenda designed to sustain economic recovery.

"I've actually read with some astonishment this morning suggestions that John Major's leadership will be challenged," John MacGregor, transport secretary, told BBC Radio Saturday. "I think John Major has come through with flying colours."

Mr. Major, the most unpopular premier since opinion polls began, is likely to see his 18-vote parliamentary majority shrink further next week at a by-election called after the death of a member of parliament.

A random poll for a local newspaper published Saturday showed the Liberal Democrat Party with an 18 per cent lead over the conservatives and on target to win the Christchurch seat in southern England.

Opposition leaders insisted rifts in the ruling party caused by Maastricht could not be papered over and that Mr. Major, in charge since November 1990, was damaged beyond repair.

Lord Healey, a former labour minister, said Saturday: "He was only able to win the vote yesterday by threatening to blow up himself and the government and the Tory (Conservative) MPs by a sort of doomsday machine."

"He cannot do that every month and every time he is in trouble because it is not possible to appease the rebels, they won't go away."

Former Premier Sir Edward Heath attacked the 40 rebels who had voted against or abstained in debates on the treaty. An inability to push through the bill ratifying the treaty signed in December 1991 has crippled the government.

"You can never appease these right-wingers, never, never, never," Mr. Heath told the BBC, adding the majority view of the party on Europe must now be forcibly carried out.

But Conservative Euro-rebel James Carr warned: "If nobody listens to us we are going to have to make them listen to us but I think they don't want that... they want it done peaceably."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Azeris seek Iran's help to end fighting

TEHRAN (AFP) — Azerbaijan's acting President Geidar Aliyev called Saturday for Iranian help in ending the battle with Armenian forces around the Azeri town of Agdam. Tehran Radio said, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, in a telephone conversation with Mr. Aliyev, condemned "the occupation of Agdam and the continued Armenian aggression," against Azerbaijan. Armenian forces from the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh Friday seized Agdam, headquarters of Azeri forces fighting Armenian separatists in the Armenian-majority enclave. "These conflicts are not in the interest of either country and reaching a real and stable peace would only be possible through negotiation and regional cooperation," Mr. Velayati said, quoted by the state-run radio. The United States condemned the capture of Armenian forces of the city of Agdam. "The United States government strongly condemns this action, which cannot be justified on the grounds of legitimate self-defence," said State Department spokesman Michael McCurry. "We call on the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians to cease their hostile military actions and withdraw completely and unconditionally from Agdam," Mr. Curry said.

New Pakistani cabinet sworn in

ISLAMABAD (R) — Acting President Wasim Sajjad swore in a six-member caretaker cabinet to run Pakistan until national elections set for Oct. 6, the Pakistani news agency said. The ministers were named as Syed Baber Ali, Mohammad Shafique, Ahmad Farooq, Fatah Khan Bandial, Nisar Memon and Abdus Sattar, a retired senior diplomat who was expected to take charge of foreign affairs. Their offices would be announced later, the agency said. All the ministers are reported to be retired bureaucrats or army officers, chosen as political neutrals who would not try to influence the election results. They will serve with caretaker Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi, a former World Bank vice president.

Cholera sweeps through southern CIS

MOSCOW (AFP) — A cholera epidemic appeared to be sweeping across southern parts of the former Soviet Union with outbreaks reported in Azerbaijan and the Russian Caucasus and three deaths in Tajikistan, ITAR-TASS said Saturday. Tajik doctors said the border town of Fandj, home to a large Russian Border Guard base, had been placed under quarantine in a bid to isolate those infected there, the agency said. The epidemic in the troubled former Russian republic had been caused by the return of Tajik refugees from Afghanistan, where many fled after pro-Communists ousted an alliance of Muslims and self-styled democrats from power. The fresh cholera reports came the day after the Brussels-based medical charity Medicines Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors Without Borders), said two cholera epidemics had hit the Tajik-Afghan border region in Central Asia.

Nigerian leader calls for unity

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military President Ibrahim Babangida Friday appealed to electors to help resolve the political impasse following the announcement of last month's presidential election. "There is a compelling need to save our country from the verge of partisan division," General Babangida said in a speech to members of the 11-strong Senate in the capital Abuja. "As leaders of your respective parties, I call on you to prevail on your parties to tread the path of unity and stability of our country. As representatives of our people, I urged you to present faithfully our genuine concern to ensure a successful handover of power to a civilian president," he said in a speech faxed to Reuters in Lagos.

8 killed in S. African attacks

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Eight people were killed in attacks Friday night in a black township and squatter camp east of Johannesburg, police said Saturday. Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Dave Bruce said six people were shot dead and two were seriously wounded when two men, one armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, fired on patrons in a bar in Daveyton township. In a nearby squatter camp, named for slain black activist Chris Hani, two charred bodies were found in a burned-out shack after an attack in which six others were wounded. Among these, three children, a man and a woman had gunshot wounds, while another man had been hacked and stabbed. Col. Bruce said police patrols in the area had been attacked six times during the night by people armed with automatic rifles and other weapons, including petrol bombs. No one was hurt.

'Man who saved London' dies

PARIS (AFP) — Michel HOLLAND, "the man who saved London" by locating the launching pads from which German forces rained V-1 rockets on the British capital, died earlier this month, aged 95, his family announced. In 1943 Mr. Holland broadcast information out of occupied France that enabled the British Air Force to destroy the launching pads that were posing a serious threat to allied morale. A veteran of the 1914-18 war, Mr. Holland was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, an honour rarely accorded to non-British nationals. A book about him published in 1960 was entitled The Man Who Saved London, and his efforts to locate the V-1 launching pads in the Normandy region was made the subject of a television play two years later. Holland, who died on July 16 in the Herault department, in southern France, was buried earlier this week at a village in the Cevennes, his son Florian Holland said.

Japan opposition boosts chances of ruling

TOKYO (R) — Japan's opposition parties Saturday improved their chances of forming a broad-based coalition government after maverick reformist Morihiro Hosokawa signalled support for their cause.

Mr. Hosokawa's centrist, anti-ramp Japan New Party (JNP) will hold the crucial swing votes when parliament meets in August to choose a prime minister to replace lame duck Kiichi Miyazawa.

The conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed Japan since 1955, lost its majority in Sunday's general election but remains the largest party.

Before the election, five opposition parties had already pledged to form an alternative coalition excluding the scandal-tainted LDP.

The daily Yomiuri Shimbun said Mr. Hosokawa, an outspoken anti-corruption campaigner, pledged to back an opposition alliance in a meeting with Ichiro Ozawa, the "shadow shogun" of the five-party group.

If the alliance between JNP and its smaller parliamentary ally, the Harbinger New Party, swings its 49 votes to the group, Japan will have a non-LDP government for the first time in nearly four decades.

The five opposition parties — the Socialists, the Buddhist-backed Komeito, the Renewals, the centrist Democratic Socialists and the tiny Socialist Democratic Federation — had long urged Mr. Hosokawa to join them and guarantee a parliamentary majority.

After hastily arranged talks Saturday, executives of the five parties agreed to accept a set of conditions for joining any coalition put forward jointly by the JNP and the Harbinger New Party.

In an interview with the domestic Yonhap News Agency, Mr. Han said the South could provide financial and technological aid, needed to transform North Korea's nuclear reactors into light water-cooled versions that do not produce the fissionable material that can be used to produce atomic weapons.

"North Korea asked the United States at talks in Geneva on July 19 to help it introduce light water-moderated reactors because it wanted not only to solve its serious energy crisis but also prove its nuclear programme is for peaceful use only," Mr. Han told Yonhap.

South Korea was encouraged by the North's pledge at the

Geneva talks last Monday to reopen talks with the nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The United States responded by offering to help the North obtain the light water reactors if it permitted inspections.

But North Korea, which denies it is developing a nuclear arsenal, appeared to reinterpret the agreement Friday.

In a statement on the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) North Korea's Foreign Ministry said it would not permit IAEA inspections until it received help for the transition.

If help with the reactors was avoided or delayed "under the pretext of legal and financial reasons, it cannot be regarded as a stance for resolving the problem," the report said.

The demand was totally contrary to the agreement with the United States, a South Korean government official said.

The agreement was clear that inspections must occur first.

Yonhap said the North had proposed the South help finance the transition to light water reactors in talks last July. But the



With their belongings afloat on a large inner tube, two men walk through the flooded areas in India (AFP photo)

South Asian flood toll passes 2,000

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepali officials said Saturday 1,100 people have been killed in floods and landslides, taking the total death toll in floods devastating wide areas of north India, Nepal and Bangladesh to more than 2,000.

The officials said the final toll in Nepal could double when reports come in from isolated areas of the impoverished and mountainous country, where communications are poor.

"The figures are changing almost every hour," said Bhoj Raj Pokharel of the Home (Interior) Ministry.

He said an estimated 100,000 families had been badly affected by the floods, most of them in the southern lowlands near the Indian border.

Around 750 people were killed in north India over the past week as near incessant rain sent rivers spilling over their banks to flood huge areas and make some 6.6 million homeless, according to police, officials and domestic news agencies.

In Bangladesh, officials said nearly 150 people had died in

floods which inundated at least 350 villages.

Officials said 25 of the country's 64 administrative districts were under water. More than 100,000 people had been evacuated to safety but up to three million were marooned.

All three countries launched relief operations to rescue as many people as they could and drop food to those who could not be brought to safety.

Helicopters plucked hundreds from rooftops and areas of higher ground where villagers had fled encroaching floodwaters.

In India, the air force has carried out round-the-clock relief flights to drop food, medicines and water-purifying tablets to people marooned by water polluted by rotting carcasses of livestock.

On Saturday, however, the rains stopped over much of the region and weather forecasters said there should be a clear period of about 48 hours before more arrived.

In Punjab, the worst-hit region in north India where more than three million people were forced

to abandon their homes, flood waters began to recede, officials said.

Punjab, India's breadbasket, has been ravaged by the floods and the receding waters are expected to reveal huge losses of crops and livestock.

Senior Punjab officials put their initial estimate of crop losses at \$700 million.

In Nepal, Home Minister Sher Bahadur Deupa said damage to crops, houses and cattle was nearly \$200 million and probably higher.

"This is a very preliminary estimate and figures are likely to go up," he said.

Flooding spread in Bihar, the north Indian state on the Nepali border.

The United News of India quoted Bihar officials as saying 1.6 million people in the state had been affected by the floods and that the situation was grim.

It said at least 135 people had died in West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh, and quoted unofficial sources as saying the toll was probably more than 200.

More people die in U.S. floods

ST. LOUIS, Missouri (R) — Fresh downpours, which claimed more lives Friday, threatened to raise river levels again in the Midwest and experts said it may take months for the floodwaters of the Mississippi and its tributaries to subside.

Three boys and a counsellor became the latest flood victims Friday when a flash flood near St. Louis ripped through a cave where they had taken shelter.

The search for three others in the cave — two boys and a 21-year-old counsellor — was to resume Saturday.

The floods, which began six weeks ago, have killed at least 37 people, displaced 31,000 others and caused at least \$10 billion in damage.

Up to four inches (six cm) of rain fell within an hour Friday as thunderstorms raked the flood-stricken region. Flash flood warn-

ings were issued throughout the Midwest.

"We are dealing with something at least into September. It could go beyond that," said Jim Brown, a spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers' St. Louis District.

He said it takes weeks for the Mississippi to drop below flood level when it is as high as it has been, and that this year the river was higher and moving slower than in 1973, when the last deluge hit.

The Mississippi is expected to crest at 47 feet (14 metres) at St. Louis, but meteorologists said with more rain Friday in the Upper Mississippi Valley that crest may increase.

In Hardin, Illinois, roughly 80 kilometres north of St. Louis, residents were trying to hold back floodwaters from two swollen rivers — the Mississippi and the

Illinois.

Located on a peninsula between the two waterways and accessible primarily by helicopter, the town of 1,100 has set up a makeshift food repository full of donated supplies, plus a bank and a post office in a school.

The U.S. Attorney in St. Louis, Stephen Higgins, set up a flood crime task force to prevent price-gouging by people seeking to exploit shortages of food and supplies.

"In the wake of the floods, we could see a devastation of a different sort," he said. "We want to send a message to scam artists who would further victimise people."

Federal aid in the form of a \$3 billion relief bill has been held up in Congress but President Bill Clinton said Friday he expected congressional action next week.

Crash shows Chinese air safety falling behind

PEKING (R) — An air crash that killed at least 59 passengers in a remote but popular tourism spot has fuelled worries that Chinese air safety is falling behind the furious growth of civil aviation, analysts said Saturday.

China Northwest Airlines Flight 2119 bound for Peking crashed on takeoff in the Ningxia province capital of Yinchuan Friday, killing at least 59 of its 113 passengers and crew, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

The dead were mostly Chinese but included at least one foreigner, a British woman, according to the British embassy in Peking.

One Hong Kong resident was missing and feared dead, an embassy official said. Their names were not disclosed.

At least two other foreigners, one said to be French, were believed to be among survivors but their condition was not known, officials said.

The crash was the first reported this year, following four air disasters in four months last year that killed at least 276, including many foreign tourists.

Sketchy reports on Friday's disaster said the British Aerospace 146 faltered in a second takeoff attempt and slammed into a

marsh just beyond the runway, where it broke apart.

"Much of the plane was shattered into pieces and the wreckage was mired in marsh waters about a metre deep, making rescue efforts even more difficult," the official Guangming Daily reported from the crash scene.

"The cause of the crash was not known," it said.

Hundreds of troops and police joined the rescue in Yinchuan, a city near the Great Wall that attracts large numbers of tourists seeking adventure in China's rugged and sparsely-populated northwest.

Thieves snatch Roman relics from British Museum

LONDON (R) — Thieves broke into the British Museum, home of one of the world's greatest antiquities collections, and made off with Roman jewellery and coins worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, police said. A museum spokesman said the haul included eight engraved or carved semi-precious stones, a gold ring, a necklace and a number of silver coins. "We know precisely what they are and their details will be distributed. We hope they will be recovered," the spokesman said. Police said the items were worth £250,000 (\$375,000). The museum houses some of the most precious pieces of the most precious pieces in the world. The spokesman said it was possible the thieves had been "stealing to order", as would they find difficult to sell the exhibits on the open market and had ignored rarer items.

1 in 3 U.K. women are sexually harassed

LONDON (R) — One in three British women have been sexually harassed at work and over half of them said nothing about it, a television survey revealed. The Mori poll conducted for British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Television revealed that 24 per cent suffered from sexual comments and jokes, the most common form of harassment. "One in seven women (15 per cent) have been stared or leered at by men and one in eight (12 per cent) said that they have been touched or brushed against," the BBC said in a statement. The poll showed that over half of the harassed women found it upsetting, while 18 per cent were "very upset or angry" and 35 per cent were "fairly upset or angry." This survey demonstrates a real need among working women for information and advice on how to tackle sexual harassment," said Alan Rogers, BBC head of continuing education and training. Fifty-one per cent of the women who had been harassed had not spoken to anyone about it, 26 per cent said they confided in a friend or relative and 14 per cent talked to their boss. Mori questioned 686 full and part-time working women aged 15 years and older for the survey. The findings will be included in a BBC television series and radio documentary.

China's biggest meteor shower predicted for August

HONG KONG (AP) — Astronomers are predicting that the biggest meteor shower seen in China for more than 100 years will grace the eastern skies next month. The Nanjing Observatory in eastern Jiangsu province forecast that the skies will sparkle just before dawn on Aug. 12, when more than 700 meteors per hour are expected, Hong Kong's Wen Wei Po newspaper reported. "It will be like the goddess of the sky scattering flowers," it said.

Vanessa Paradis cancels tour

PARIS (AFP) — Pop star Vanessa Paradis has cancelled a tour of Japan and the United States after doctors told her she needed rest, her recording company said. The 20-year-old singer was to have flown to Japan for a series of concerts beginning July 29, and was also to have performed in Los Angeles and New York. Paradis was understood to have worn herself out by giving 75 concerts since March 3 to promote her third and latest album, Vanessa Paradis, which the recording company said had already sold a million copies worldwide.

Beatles' manuscripts to be auctioned

LONDON (R) — The manuscripts of the lyrics for Beatles hits I Am The Walrus and Fool On The Hill are to be auctioned next week at a rock and roll memorabilia sale, auctioneers Sotheby's said. An archive of 5,000 never-published photographs of the Beatles, with negatives and copyright, will also be featured at the auction next Thursday. Photographer Terry Spencer is selling the black and white collection, which he shot on commission for Life magazine. The photographs show intimate scenes of the "fab four" in 1963 and 1964, including scenes of them in their dressing room playing with model trains and escaping from screaming fans and performing on stage. Audiences were stunned by the surreal references in Walrus, which was penned by Beatle John Lennon, who was murdered in 1980. "The original manuscript — its casual, almost slapdash appearance is typical of the man — is... an extremely valuable example of its form, and one made all the more interesting to collectors because of its minor variations from the lyric as recorded," Beatles biographer Mark Lewisohn said in a statement.

Opera House wins Ascot showpiece

ASCOT, England (R) — Dual derby winner Commander In Chief lost his unbeaten record Saturday when he was beaten by Opera House in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes, one of the highlights of the British horse racing season.

Opera House, a five-year-old ridden by champion jockey Michael Roberts, took up the running with 300 metres to go and held on to win the valuable group prize for owner Sheikh Mohammed.

Commander In Chief, winner of the English and Irish Derbys, was involved in a protracted struggle with White Muzzle, winner of the Italian Derby, and was just run out of it into third place in the final stages.

Opera House, winner of his third successive Group One race following victories in the Coronation Cup at Epsom and the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown, finished 1-1/2 lengths ahead.

A short head separated White Muzzle, ridden by John Ried, and Commander In Chief, mount of Pat Eddery.

The result was some compensation for South African jockey Roberts who starts a 10-day suspension next week imposed by Stewards at Newbury last Saturday for causing international interference — a ruling hotly disputed by Roberts.

Opera House provided Sheikh Mohammed with his second win in the prestigious race, following Belmez in 1990.

The son of Sadler's Wells stayed towards the rear of the 10-strong field in the early stages as User Friendly made the running for jockey George Duffield, attended by Ascot Gold Cup winner Drum Taps.

Turning into the 500 metres straight, User Friendly still led but Commander In Chief looked threatening with Opera House and White Muzzle just behind. User Friendly finally yielded as

Commander In Chief took command but very swiftly Opera House pounced and asserted his authority.

Commander In Chief, owned by Prince Khalid Abdullah and trained at Newmarket by Henry Cecil, started 7-4 favourite after winning all five races in his brief career. But on the day there was no denying that Opera House, an 8-1 chance, had the greater experience and ability to deal with his younger challenger.

White Muzzle, at 9-1, ran superbly in by far the hardest task of his career.

One of the big disappointments was Commander In Chief's stable mate Tenby, also owned by Prince Khalid, who could only finish eighth.

A failure when hot favourite for the Epsom Derby in June, Tenby had redeemed himself to a certain degree when finishing third to Opera House in the Eclipse Stakes. But on this occasion it was difficult to see the glittering future once predicted for the colt.

"Roberts said: 'It's a great result after the trauma of the last week.'"

"It's not my first Group One winner for Sheikh Mohammed but I believe the King George is the greatest race for older horses in Europe."

Trainer Michael Stoute, who also won the race with Shergar in 1981, said: "You are not entitled to be confident in such a high class race, but I knew he wouldn't be out of the frame (first three)."

"He'll be trained for the Prix De L'Arc De Triomphe, but what route we take in the build-up will have to be decided. He is the perfect athlete to train."

A pastern (small leg bone) injury as a three-year-old held up his career, but Stoute said: "If he had been a Group One winner earlier he might have gone to stud and wouldn't be racing today. The injury prevented him showing his talents earlier."

Rominger puts Indurain in the shade in time trial

MONTHERY, France (AFP) — Miguel Indurain is heading for his third Tour De France victory in a row Sunday — but all the talk was of his Swiss rival Tony Rominger Saturday.

Rominger received a huge confidence boost by sensationally beating Indurain in the penultimate 48km time trial, a discipline in which the Spaniard has long been regarded as unbeatable.

It took the gutsy Swiss rider to second place overall and was his third success in this year's Tour, after he won two stages.

The result proved that the 32-year-old, winner of the Tour of Spain for the last two years, can mount a serious challenge to Indurain's supremacy next year.

Rominger's performance throughout this year's event has saved the Tour from turning into

a profession. He continually harassed the world number one rider in the key mountain stages, while the other big favourites, Italians Gianni Bugno and Claudio Chiappucci and Alex Zülle of Switzerland, all disappointed.

Had Rominger not been so unlucky in the early stages — he lost two teammates through crashes, was penalised a minute in the team time trial and punctured in both individual solo rides, including Saturday's stage win between Bretigny-Sur-Orge and Montlhéry — he might have worried Indurain even more.

He beat a tired Indurain by 42secs Saturday and now trails the yellow jersey by 4min 59sec overall, with Zennon Jaskula of Poland in third, 5:48min behind Indurain.



French Formula One driver Alain Prost (right) speaks to a mechanic during a pause in the second official practice session Saturday for Sunday's German Grand Prix (AFP photo)

Prost takes pole position for German Grand Prix

HOCKENHEIM, Germany (R) — Frenchman Alain Prost secured pole position for Sunday's German Grand Prix with another fine performance in his Williams in final qualifying Saturday.

Prost, driving a car equipped with the controversial active suspension and traction control driver aids, clocked a fastest time of one minute 38.748 seconds around the high-speed 6.815-km Hockenheim track.

His time, an improvement of three-tenths of a second on his effort Friday, ensured he will line up for the 29th pole of his career in Sunday's 45-lap race and his ninth pole in 10 races this year.

Briton Damon Hill, Prost's Williams teammate, made a bold effort to snatch pole position but had to be satisfied with the second quickest time and a share of the front row of the grid.

German Michael Schumacher was third fastest after producing a remarkable lap in the final seconds of the hour-long qualifying session.

He clocked 1:39.580 in his Benetton to get the edge over Brazilian Ayrton Senna in a McLaren.

The British Ligier pairing of Mark Blundell and Martin Brundle took fifth and sixth places on a day when several drivers struggled to improve their opening qualifying times.

Austrian Gerhard Berger crashed at the third chicane in his Ferrari but escaped unhurt. The car was badly damaged.

"I came into the chicane too quickly went over the kerb and lost control. That was it," said Berger.

Schumacher's late lap was the most exciting of the day and prompted a flag-waving display of patriotic fervour from the big crowd.

He had been unable to improve his time earlier on and was on old tyres when he made his last bid. "I really went for it," said Schumacher. "I was over the edge at times but I got the time in the end."

Prost is seeking to add to his record 50 Grand Prix wins Sunday and increase his 20-point lead over Senna in the title race. "It is always important to be on pole and especially at a circuit like this where it is bumpy and difficult to pass with 200 litres of fuel on board," said Prost.

"So I am pleased, but I know that it will be necessary to make a good start. I had big over steer into the first corner and the car is not perfect."

"I think I will have to do something different tomorrow on full tanks. Before we came here we thought Hockenheim 'would be one of the best circuits for our car but that is not the case. It is a race where you cannot predict anything at all.'"

Hill said: "It's going to be a pretty interesting race and I think it will be pretty close between the top four cars. I am glad to be on the front row here — it is going to be a bit of a cracker."

Schumacher was disappointed to hear McLaren were using the same Ford V8 engine powering his Benetton.

"I was very surprised to hear about that. I thought we were the factory team," he said.

Olympic champion Young finally beaten at London Grand Prix

LONDON (R) — Kevin Young, the Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion unbeaten in 26 successive races, sensationally lost to world champion Samuel Mateete at the London Grand Prix.

The American world record holder looked to have the edge on the 400 metres hurdles until he stuttered approaching the last hurdle, lost his rhythm and was beaten on the line in a photo-finish.

Mateete, winner of the 1991 world title in Tokyo, clocked 48.85 seconds, just 0.01 ahead of the American.

Young had controlled the race completely and led from the start. He said: "You can never take the hurdles lightly and maybe it was a little lost concentration or fatigue. But if you are to be beaten it's best to lose to someone like Mateete."

Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie was given the perfect boost for his showdown race with world record-holder Carl Lewis next week when he convincingly beat Leroy Burrell.

The American made a false start in a repeat of the Barcelona final which former world record-holder and world silver medalist Burrell had been favourite to win.

American Jon Drummond made a flying start second time around and Christie had to work hard to run him down to maintain his season's unbeaten record.

The Briton, who meets Lewis in Gateshead, northern England

next Friday for a fee reported to be \$100,000 each, won in a relatively slow 10.27.

Burrell was second in 10.33, the same time as Drummond. European 110 metres hurdles champion Colin Jackson also kept intact his unbeaten record this season and inflicted two demoralising defeats on Olympic silver medalist Tony Dees.

Jackson beat the American in the first heat and then outran Dees from the gun in the final as he posted the fourth-fastest time of the year, 13.20.

Jackson, who beat Olympic champion Mark McKoy of Canada for the second time in Nice Wednesday, also defeated fellow-Briton and Olympic bronze medalist Tony Jarrett in the final. Dees clocked 13.34 and Jarrett 13.64.

Olympic high jump champion and world record-holder Javier Sotomayor of Cuba leapt 2.40 metres to equal his own best mark for the season.

He set a British all-comers' record and comprehensively destroyed the class field. Sotomayor made one attempt at a world record 2.45.

Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion Sally Gunnell produced another storming run in an unbeaten season, posting the second fastest time of the year. Gunnell, who beat an average field in Nice Wednesday, des-

troyed a better one including American Kim Batten, third fastest in the world this year, and Russian Vera Ordina, fifth in the Olympics, to confirm herself as favourite for the world title next month.

Gunnell, already credited with the fastest time this year, won in 53.85 with Deon Hemmings of Jamaica second in 54.98.

Olympic champion and world record-holder Jan Zelezny of the Czech Republic won the javelin with a throw of 86.28, but may have a fight to win the world title as Steve Backley finished second with 85.10 in his first competitive appearance since the Olympics where he won bronze.

Backley, out since last August with a shoulder injury, threw just three times, reaching the World Championship qualifying standard.

The British former world record holder withdrew early from the competition, saying he wanted to rest his shoulder.

Meanwhile British athletics officials denied accusations of incompetence directed at them by world pole vault champion Sergei Bubka who failed to get a visa for Friday's meeting at Crystal Palace.

Bubka criticised the British Athletics Federation (BAF) when he left Nice Thursday night, saying they had failed to get him and nine other former Soviet athletes visas for the London

meeting. But BAF promoter Andy Norman rejected the accusation, and blamed the athletes' managers for not applying for British visas as advised.

Bubka, a star attraction at the Nice Grand Prix Wednesday where he was attempting to set his 35th world record, said: "The British Federation were sleeping. They should have sorted the visa arrangements out. It's typical of them."

The Ukrainian and Belarus javelin thrower Vladimir Sasimavich were the biggest missing names on Friday's card, together with several second string women middle distance runners.

Norman said, however, the British federation was in no way to blame.

"We sent them invitations with forms for visa applications and sent a copy of the invitation to the embassies. But the athletes' two managers never sent an application form to the embassy," he said.

"There are lots of former Soviet athletes competing here tonight, it's just two groups represented by these managers who are missing."

He said Bubka had tried this week to obtain a last-minute visa from British consulate officials in Berlin where he now lives, but was told it was only available in Dusseldorf, and by then it was too late to make the trip.

Spain reach Federation Cup final

FRANKFURT (R) — Conchita Martinez defied stubborn French resistance from Julie Halard as Spain reached the final of the Federation Cup women's tennis tournament for the fourth time in five years Saturday.

Martinez needed to battle hard for more than two hours under a hot sun to stop a spirited Halard comeback in a 6-1 3-6 6-3 victory

in the opening singles' rubber. The victory paved the way for former French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario to clinch the Spaniards a 2-0 winning lead over the French with a 6-1 6-4 victory over Nathalie Tauziat in the second singles.

Spain won the most prestigious prize in women's tennis in 1991 and were beaten finalists last

year and in 1989. The Spaniards, who revel in the slow clay courts, were expected to go through against the French who have never reached the final of the 31-year-old event.

But the tie might have taken on a completely different perspective if Halard, who battled back from one-set down against Martinez, had managed to turn her fighting spirit into a victory after an exciting third set which could have gone either way.

After both players had broken service three times in the first seven games of the final set, Halard double-faulted in the eighth game to give Martinez the crucial break to lead 5-3. The Spaniard then served out for the match.

It was a tough end for the diminutive Halard who always looked capable of pulling off an upset with her strong backhand and incessant scurrying about the court.

Sanchez was always expected to beat Tauziat. But a Halard upset could have forced an interesting deciding doubles. In Sunday's final, the Spanish will meet the winners of Saturday's

other semifinal between Argentina and Australia.

The two teams were level 1-1 after the first two singles. Ines Gorrochategui put Argentina ahead with a 6-4 6-2 win over Michelle Jaggard-Lai in the opening rubber before Nicole Provis came back from behind to beat Florencia Labat 1-6 6-2 6-3 in the second singles.

"I always have tough matches against Julie," Martinez said. "She hits the ball very aggressively and it is always difficult."

Sanchez did not have things all her own way against Tauziat who upset Wimbledon finalist Jana Novotna when the French put out third seeds Czechoslovakia in Friday's quarterfinals.

After taking the first set and leading 3-0 in the second, Sanchez almost let Tauziat back into the match when she allowed the French player to break her service in the fifth game and level to 3-3 in the next game.

But Sanchez ran for everything and made the crucial break in the 10th game to seal the match. Tauziat, down 0-40, saved three match points but then hit a forehand over the baseline to give Sanchez victory.

Brazil face altitude ordeal in World Cup

LA PAZ (R) — Brazil's worried soccer team continue their bid to qualify for the World Cup Sunday more concerned about the altitude than the opposition.

Nearly all the talk among the Brazilian squad this week has been on the possible effects of playing at 3,700 metres (12,000 feet) above sea level Bolivia's capital La Paz.

Opponents Bolivia have scarcely been given a mention, despite their 7-1 demolition of Venezuela away in the opening South American Group B match last Sunday.

Brazil drew their first game in Ecuador 0-0 last week and defeat against Bolivia would put them in a difficult position in the five-team group, from which two countries go through to the World Cup finals.

Brazil have controversially decided to arrive in La Paz just three hours before kick off.

"The best way to adapt is to arrive 21 days before, but this was impossible because of our fixture

list," said assistant coach Mario Zagallo.

"Failing that, it is scientifically proven that the second best alternative is to arrive immediately before the game."

But newspapers have been full of interviews with doctors saying Brazil have got it all wrong and warning that some players could go down with altitude sickness — which produces dizziness, vomiting and nose bleeds — within minutes of arriving.

Australia, who were expected to start packing their bags for home after the first round, reached the final of the Federation Cup for the first time for nine years after clinching the deciding doubles rubber against Argentina Saturday.

Veteran campaigner Elizabeth Smylie, a member of the Australian team which lost to Czechoslovakia in their last appearance in the final in 1984, teamed up with Renae Stubbs to beat Ines Gorrochategui and Patricia Tarabini 4-6 6-2 6-3.

GOREN BRIDGE

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NO FINESSE TO THIS PLAY

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ Q 2

♥ A 8 6 4

♦ Q 4 2

♣ A Q 7

WEST

♠ J 10 6 4 3

♥ K 8 7 5

♦ J 8 7

♣ J 10 9 6 3

EAST

♠ K 8 7 5

♥ K 10

♦ 10 9 6 3

♣ K J 5

SOUTH

♠ A 9

♥ Q 7 5 3

♦ A K 6

♣ 10 8 4

The bidding:

South West North East

1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass

4 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

There are those who look no further than a finesse for a way to fulfill a contract. Seventh heaven is when there is more than one finesse available.

The auction was routine, albeit old-fashioned. Playing forcing jump raises, North's response to partner's one heart opening bid was clear-cut and, with a minimum, South had no ambitions beyond game.

West led the jack of spades, covered by the queen and king and taken by the ace. Declarer ran the queen of hearts for the first of several

al finesses. That lost to the king. East returned a spade and West, on lead with the ten, shifted to a club. South elected to run it to the ten. That lost to East's jack, and the defender exited safely with a trump. Declarer won in hand to try the last finesse available — the queen of clubs. When it too lost, the debacle was complete.

Let's see how an expert would tackle the hand. First, it costs nothing to cover the opening lead with the queen — players have been known to lead the jack from K J 10. But after winning the ace of spades at trick one declarer does not have to take another finesse!

At trick two South should cash the ace of hearts — with 10 trumps in the combined holding, chances of finding a singleton king are good and, if it drops, the contract is safe. When nothing good happens, declarer should clear three rounds of diamonds, then exit with a spade.

Should East win that trick, an endplay has already been sprung. When, in fact, West gains the lead, the only safe return is a club and declarer simply covers any card West leads. East can win and cash the king of hearts, but is again endplayed in declarer's web and any return concedes the contract. Try it.

Olympics Festival opens

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The 12th U.S. Olympic Festival began with high expectations and even higher temperatures. Neither was expected to abate.

Organisers had sold nearly \$2 million worth of tickets as of midnight Thursday. About 60,000 attended Friday night's opening ceremonies at the new Alamodome, with record-setting crowds anticipated for figure skating and filled seats expected at venues across the city.

"This is a day this city's been waiting on for about six years," said Bob Coleman, chairman of the local organising committee. "We feel San Antonio has gone from a city not capable of holding this event in 1987 to one of the top sports cities in the United States."

"We feel after these 10 days that we will have emerged."

Not to mention baked. Temperatures were in the mid to upper 90s (35C) in San Antonio Friday, as they have been for the past several days.

The National Weather Service said there was no change in sight for the next several days, which should come as no real surprise to the locals. It hasn't rained in San Antonio since June 26.

Some cyclists beat some of the heat Friday, getting out early in the morning to determine the first

medal winners of the festival.

In the women's 33-mile (53 kilometres) team time trials, the team of Carol Ann Bostick of Corrales, N.M., Linda Breneman of Mission Viejo, Calif., Dede Demet of Milwaukee and Sally Zack of Boulder, Colo., won the gold in 1 hour, 17 minutes, 3.03 seconds.

The men's 49 1/2-mile (79-kilometre) team trial was held after it had warmed up to 97. The team of Johnson of Brier, Wash., Andrew Lewis of Old Greenwich, Conn., Scott Mercer of Boulder, Colo., and Eric Zaltas of Oakland, Calif., won the gold medal in 1:47:04.

"It was very hot," said Chris Carlson of Dallas, whose team finished third. "One of my teammates said he felt like he was riding in front of a hair dryer on hot."

The only other events held Friday were preliminaries in team handball and synchronised swimming. The festival was expected to pick up considerably Saturday with competition in 20 sports, including figure skating, basketball and swimming.

About 4,200 athletes will compete in 37 sports. The list includes about 125 Olympians in 22 sports, as well as the No. 1 pick in the Major League draft, shortstop Alex Rodriguez.

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<p align="center">CONCORD</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 677420</p> <p align="center">THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.</p>	<p align="center">PLAZA</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 699238</p> <p align="center">Adel Imam in Wad Sayyed Al Shaghal play (Arabic)</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30</p>	<p align="center">PHILADELPHIA</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 634144</p> <p align="center">Al Pacino — in SCENT OF A WOMAN</p> <p align="center">Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:15, 9 p.m.</p>	<p align="center">Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p align="center">Tel.: 675571</p> <p align="center">For the first time in Amman you have a date with the National Palestinian Theatre — the Gaza Strip — in a play entitled: The Assassination of Hantshalah by artist Saeed Bitar</p> <p align="center">Shows on Friday and Saturday, June 4 and 5 at 8:30 p.m. Please book seats in advance</p>
<p align="center">Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155</p> <p align="center">AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p align="center">AHLAN NABIL AND HISHAM THEATRE</p> <p align="center">The theatre will be closed in preparation for "Ahlam Arab Summit" play which will be shown at the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts.</p>			

WANTED BY THE FBI

RAMZI AHMED YOUSEF



DESCRIPTION

CRIMINAL RECORD

CAUTION

The U.S. government displays a wanted poster at the U.S. State Department Friday, offering a \$2 million reward for the arrest of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, one of the main suspects in the World Trade Centre bombing (AFP photo)

U.S. announces \$2m reward for suspect

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States is offering a \$2 million reward for information leading to the arrest of a suspect in New York's World Trade Centre bombing.

"Effective immediately the Department of State is offering a reward of up to \$2 million for information that leads to the arrest, anywhere in the world, of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef," State Department spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters.

He said Yousef "should be considered armed and extremely dangerous."

Mr. Yousef, one of six suspects charged in the Feb. 26 attack on the World Trade Centre that killed six people and injured more than 1,000, fled the United States using an Iraqi passport and is now probably in the Middle East, Mr. McCurry said.

"Yousef has demonstrated... willingness and ability to undertake acts of international terrorism and is likely to engage in such acts in the future unless he is brought into custody," Mr. McCurry added.

A senior official said the U.S. government has information on which country Mr. Yousef has fled to but he refused to provide details.

The New York Times reported Friday that the administration's plan to offer the reward has been stymied by a dispute over which agency should put up the money.

Unidentified officials told the Times that the dispute between the State Department and the FBI may have cost the United States a chance of catching Mr. Yousef before he vanished in the Middle East.

The State Department has issued a composite picture of the suspect and described him as white, two metres tall, of medium build, with brown eyes and olive complexion.

The announcement followed the arrests late Thursday of two more people in connection with a failed plot to bomb New York City landmarks.

The latest two arrests, made in a beachfront hotel in West Wildwood, New Jersey, brought the number of detained suspects in the alleged ring to 12.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) identified the two

new suspects as Matarawi Mohammad Saleh, 37, and Asraf Mohammad, 31.

Mr. Mohammad was arrested for harbouring Mr. Saleh, who has been on the run since he was charged in the bombing conspiracy.

The 12 suspects are accused of involvement in an alleged plot to bomb the United Nations building, two road tunnels connecting New York City to New Jersey and other targets.

Mr. Saleh "was not the one driving them from point A to point B. He was a player," a law enforcement source said.

After monitoring the plot through an informer, the FBI arrested eight people June 24, allegedly catching some of the suspects red-handed making bombs.

A ninth suspect was arrested six days later.

On July 14, the 10th suspect, Ibrahim Elmaghrabi, was taken from a list of seven men charged in connection with the bombing of the trade centre.

Mr. Saleh appeared Friday before a federal magistrate and waived his right to a hearing on whether he could be taken to New York to face bombing conspiracy and attempted bombing charges.

He was arrested Thursday night with Mr. Mohammad at the Sea Wolf apartments, a motel on New Jersey's southern shore about 200 kilometres from New York. Witnesses said Mr. Saleh was in the middle of a cookout with his five-year-old son and friends.

Mr. Mohammad was charged with harbouring a federal fugitive.

Federal marshals were to take Mr. Saleh to New York City, where he will face arraignment next week. Mr. Mohammad was being held pending a Tuesday bail hearing.

If convicted, Mr. Saleh faces up to 15 years in prison, authorities said. Mr. Mohammad could face up to five years in prison and \$5,000 fine.

Authorities say the men entered the United States in the 1980s. Mr. Saleh's lawyer said he believed the two are legal U.S. residents.

Gardini suicide gives no let-up for Italian probe

MILAN (Agencies) — Italy's corruption probe pressed on relentlessly Saturday as the country reeled from the suicide of Raul Gardini, the second scandal-tainted executive to take his own life in three days.

"The suicide of a man as strong as Gardini is a sign of tragic clarity: 'It's the hour of reckoning for everybody, even those who seemed untouchable,'" said the top-selling La Repubblica newspaper.

Mr. Gardini, a former chairman of the crisis-torn Ferruzzi company, was found dead in his Milan apartment on Friday morning with a bullet through the head and still clutching an automatic pistol.

Legal sources said police had been about to arrest him for alleged involvement in the bribery scandal rocking Italy.

The result of an autopsy was expected to confirm Mr. Gardini's death as suicide. He will be buried in the Adriatic town of Ravenna Monday.

Carlo Sama, former chief executive officer of Ferruzzi's main company Montedison, was being

held in a Milan jail pending questioning by magistrates for alleged false accounting.

Mr. Sama, who like Mr. Gardini married into the Ferruzzi family, was arrested with two other Ferruzzi executives late Friday.

One of them, Vittorio Giuliani Ricci, married to another daughter of Ferruzzi's founder, was later granted house arrest.

A fourth man, Giuseppe Berlingi, a Ferruzzi family financial adviser in Switzerland, gave himself up to Milan magistrates on Saturday. A warrant had also been issued for his arrest.

Ferruzzi, buckling under \$20 billion of debts, is being investigated by Milan stock exchange authorities after it restated huge losses on its 1992 balance sheet.

The death of Mr. Gardini, the 12th person to die after implication in Italy's massive graft and corruption scandal, has sparked a fierce debate over the methods used by examining magistrates in the ever-widening corruption probe.

The string of deaths also occupied the front pages of the nation's newspapers.

ASEAN ministers endorse security forum

Combined agency despatches

SINGAPORE — Foreign ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Saturday approved a proposal to set up an 18-member forum to tackle thorny political and security issues in the region.

A joint communique issued at the end of a two-day meeting said the ministers endorsed the proposal for an ASEAN regional forum "to promote consultations on regional political and security issues."

Last week officials from the six ASEAN countries — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — proposed the creation of the forum to aid regional stability.

The forum members are ASEAN, its seven main trading partners — the United States, Japan, Canada, the European Community, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, plus Russia, China, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea.

All the members are participating in talks this week and next in Singapore.

The communique said the

forum would gather in Bangkok next year at the time of the next ASEAN foreign ministers meeting.

ASEAN, a 26-year old group, added political and economic issues to its agenda last year amid worries of an increasingly strong China, an unstable Cambodia, a regional arms build-up and a post-cold war withdrawal from the area of U.S. forces.

China Friday sought to assure the ASEAN nations that it does not seek dominance in the region and will not use force to settle disputes.

"China is fully committed to peace and stability in this region. China will not become a potential or real threat," Wu Jianmin, spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, quoted Foreign Minister Qian Qichen as telling his ASEAN counterparts.

The ASEAN communique Friday called on the U.N. Security Council to act to halt Serbian aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The communique expressed "serious concern over the desper-

ate situation in the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

They called on the Security Council to "act decisively to halt the Serbian aggression" and "fully restore the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

The association failed to reach a consensus on a proposal by U.S. President Bill Clinton for a meeting of Pacific leaders later this year, according to officials here.

"There was no ASEAN common stand which means members will make their own decisions (on whether to go)," Malaysia's Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi told reporters.

Russia told ASEAN it is ready to supply South East Asia with sophisticated weapons but will not break any international arms embargoes.

Malaysia recently announced it was buying 18 advanced MiG-29 fighters in what was regarded as a breakthrough sale by Russia in a region that normally buys its arms from the West.

Russia was prepared to provide "sophisticated means of self-defence to our partners in the

ASEAN region," Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev told the ASEAN ministers.

But Russia would ensure that such weapons were not used to heighten tensions in the region, contribute to regional instability "or aid or abet international terrorism," Mr. Kozyrev said.

U.S. sees new dialogue

Secretary of State Warren Christopher's meetings with his Chinese and Russian counterparts here could be the start of a new dialogue on security in the Pacific rim, a senior U.S. official said Saturday.

"You could be seeing a pivotal point here where you're beginning to draw Russia and China... into a direct discussion dialogue on security issues," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

Mr. Christopher is scheduled to meet with China's Qian and separately Russia's Kozyrev Sunday in discussions surrounding the ASEAN meetings.

The meeting with Mr. Qian will focus on "significant issues and

problems," including nuclear non-proliferation, relations with North Korea and Cambodia, human rights and the smuggling of Chinese migrants, said the official.

The foreign ministers' communique urged the international community to finance and speed up resettlement of Vietnamese boat people and welcomed a commitment by Vietnam to their repatriation.

They agreed to consider setting up "a regional mechanism" on human rights but said the issue should not be linked to foreign aid and required a balanced approach.

It asked for "strong political commitment by all parties" to resolve stalled world trade talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) by the end of 1993.

They backed a "smooth and swift implementation" of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), an effort to create a free trade zone through tariff cuts, but recommended no measures to hasten the slower-than-expected scheme, which began in January.

COLUMN

Indonesian gets Magsaysay Award

MANILA (R) — An Indonesian scholar who heads South East Asia's largest Muslim organisation has been chosen to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for the Community Leadership. Abdurrahman Wahid, chairman of Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the Council of Islamic Scholars, is being recognised for guiding the Muslim organisation as a force for religious tolerance, fair economic development and democracy in Indonesia. Born in East Java in 1940, Mr. Wahid received his formal education in Indonesia, Egypt and the Iraq. As the grandson of the NU's founding chairman, he is steeped in the Nahdlatul Ulama tradition, but his approach has been anything but traditional, the Magsaysay Award Foundation said in a statement. To improve education, working conditions, nutrition and health in NU villages, Mr. Wahid initiated community development projects. And launched a rural banking system to give farmers and small businesses access to credit. The Magsaysay Award is named after a Philippine president who died in a plane crash in 1957.

Princess Diana cancels visits

LONDON (AP) — Princess Diana, suffering from a stomach flu, cancelled a visit to northeast England. Princess Diana had been scheduled to visit a tennis centre in Newcastle, 441 kilometres north of London, before watching 750 people with organ transplants take part in a series of games. After being ordered by doctors to stay at home, the princess sent regrets to organisers of the Great North British Transport Games.

British army pays out £8,500 to racism victim

LONDON (AFP) — The British army agreed to pay £8,500 (\$13,000) in compensation to a black, former soldier, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) said. Anthony Evans, 25, the grandson of an American GI, joined the army in 1985 but left in 1991 after suffering six years of serious racial harassment from his colleagues and superiors. The CRE, the government body who supported Mr. Evans' compensation battle, said a military inquiry established that Mr. Evans was "tried" twice by a kangaroo court of fellow soldiers, wearing blankets over their heads who found him guilty of being black. The punishment for this "crime" was being thrown in a bath full of bleach and urine and scrubbed in an attempt to whiten his skin.

Hughes Gall to head Paris Opera

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France (AFP) — Hughes Gall, director general of the Grand-Théâtre in Geneva, will replace Pierre Berge as head of the Paris Opera in 1995. Culture Minister Jacques Toubon said here. Mr. Gall will take over in August 1995, when his contract in Geneva expires. Mr. Toubon said during a visit to the international arts festival here. Mr. Gall, 53, was secretary general and then joint administrator of the Paris Opera between 1969 and 1980. Mr. Berge, 62, was appointed head of the Paris Opera in 1988 with the special task of launching the new opera house at Bastille, which opened in 1990. He began his term with a celebrated clash with the Israeli conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim, who was sacked from his post as artistic director in January 1989.

S. African surgeon becomes greek citizen

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Christian N. Barnard, the South African surgeon who performed the world's first human transplant, Friday took an oath making him a Greek citizen. "I swear loyalty to the fatherland and obedience to the constitution," he said in a special ceremony at the Interior Ministry. "You now have the rights and obligations of a Greek citizen. You belong to the Greek family from today," said Interior Minister Yannis Kefauyannis. Barnard was awarded citizenship by the Greek cabinet on June 24, after requesting it in a letter. He was in South Africa at the time. He has said he will retain his South African citizenship. In his request, Barnard, 70, pointed out that he visited Greece many times a year and that he had treated thousands of Greek patients, both in Greece and in South Africa.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Moroccan bride escapes after abduction

BORDEAUX (AFP) — A Moroccan taking his daughter out of France to force her into a marriage back home was foiled when the 23-year-old drama teacher managed to contact police, the paramilitary police said here. The father apparently forced his daughter Thursday into the back of his car, where she was trapped by child-security door locks. However, after feigning the need to go to the toilet, the young woman convinced a woman in a highway restroom that she was being abducted. The woman phoned the police, supplying an accurate description of the car. Paramilitary police in Bayonne stopped the car just before the Spanish border, and found the young woman had written SOS on a slip of paper, intending to hold it against the window as soon as people came near. The young woman was allowed to return to Bordeaux and the father drove out of the country. Police said the woman knew that her father was planning to take her to Morocco for the marriage but had expected him to act later. She believed he had abducted her this week because he feared she would flee.

Police charge suspect with second gay murder

LONDON (R) — Police investigating the deaths of five homosexual men in London Friday charged a suspect arrested earlier this week with a second murder. They said Colin Ireland, 39, who already stands accused of the murder of Care worker Andrew Collier, had also been charged with killing Maltese-born cook Emanuel Spiteri. Police launched a hunt for a suspected serial killer of gays in the capital after the deaths of Spiteri, Collier and three other men, some of whom were HIV-positive, the virus which leads to AIDS. The victims are thought to have been strangled or suffocated, some apparently after sadomasochistic sex at their homes. Ireland was arrested on Tuesday.

Eritrea denies Israeli military presence

NAIROBI (AFP) — Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki has strongly denied the existence of an Israeli military presence in Eritrean territory, the Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea reported in a broadcast monitored here. The radio quoted Mr. Afewerki as saying that such allegations were an attempt to damage relations between Eritrea and Arab countries. "The rumour heard from some quarters which claims that Israel has a military base in Eritrea is totally false and is aimed at creating confusion with the intention of spoiling relations between Eritrea and Arab countries," it quoted Mr. Afewerki as telling journalists during a visit to Saudi Arabia. "The Eritrean people had paid a great sacrifice for their land over the past 30 years and would not give an inch of their territory to a foreigner," Mr. Afewerki added. The president came under fire from the Arab World after visiting Israel earlier this year for medical treatment, amid fears he was preparing to offer Israel a military base on its Red Sea coast.

Kuwaiti jailed for Filipina's death

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti and his Lebanese wife were sentenced to seven years imprisonment with hard labour on Saturday for causing the death of a 23-year-old Filipina maid through ill-treatment, a prosecution lawyer said. University graduate Sonia Panama, who had been in Kuwait for several months, died in hospital March 8 after being admitted in a coma and suffering severe burns and other injuries. Prosecution lawyer Mariam Marashi said by telephone that the two had been convicted of causing the death of Ms. Panama unintentionally and had not been charged with murder. The Lebanese woman, identified on court only as I. Issa, would be deported after she had completed her sentence, Ms. Marashi added. She said it was not immediately known if the Kuwaiti man, identified in court only as F. Falah, and his wife would appeal against the verdict and sentence.

250 fundamentalists to go on trial in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian court is to try 250 Islamic fundamentalists, including Palestinians and women, in one of the largest trials in the country's history, legal sources said Saturday. They said the prosecution would officially announce the charges in early August and the trial would follow in a Cairo military court. "Talaah Al Fateh" (vanguard of conquest), and possession of arms with the aim of overthrowing the government. The sources said some of the group would be charged with killing two civilians in Cairo and the attempted murder of three policemen in 1990. They could face the death penalty or life terms of hard labour.

Police bulldoze 'miracle' house in central Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Security forces bulldozed a house whose owner said it had healing powers after the dwelling touched off a riot which led to dozens of injuries and 500 arrests, a newspaper reported Saturday. The house in the town of Mobarakeh, 390 kilometres south of Tehran, attracted pilgrims from around the country after its owner claimed it had special healing powers, the Salam newspaper said. Soghra Iranpur, a woman aged around 60, drew a cult following after claiming to have seen a "shining object" emerge from her oven on July 1, the anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein and one of Shi'ite Islam's holy days. Hundreds of pilgrims set up guard posts to protect the house, prompting high-ranking Muslim clergymen from nearby Esfahan to go on television and denounce "elements who seek to weaken legitimate religious beliefs."

Shuttle launch aborted 19 seconds before blast-off

CAPE CANAVERAL (AFP) — The launch of the space shuttle Discovery was aborted Saturday just 19 seconds before lift-off. Computers shut down the main engine after detecting a suspected booster problem, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) said. A turbine in the right rocket booster reached full speed, but then apparently faded, a NASA spokesman said. NASA crews quickly secured the fully-fuelled shuttle and evacuated the five astronauts.

U.S. shifts policy on Khmer role in ruling

SINGAPORE (AFP) — The United States, in the face of accusations that it was interfering in Cambodia's affairs, backed down Saturday on earlier threats to cut off aid if the Khmer Rouge won a place in the government.

A U.S. official travelling with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, stating that "our position is not that air-tight," said the United States would accept participation by the radical guerrilla group and not stand in the way of assistance to Cambodia, but under certain conditions.

Mr. Christopher arrived here Saturday for broad-ranging consultations on regional issues, including Cambodia, with his counterparts in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

And the remarks by the U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, came after ministers of ASEAN — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — gathered here for their annual meeting, had called on the United States not to interfere in efforts by Cambodian leaders to strike a deal giving the radical Khmer Rouge a role in national politics.

Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, also here for talks with the ASEAN ministers, concurred, voicing opposition to moves to "impose sanctions" in a bid to influence Cambodia's political future.

If the Khmer Rouge rejoined

the peace process, then aid could be forthcoming if a government were formed with its participation, the U.S. official said.

"It will depend on the nature of their participation," he said, a possible reference to calls for Khmer Rouge inclusion in an advisory but not executive capacity.

"We will not give aid, in any event, directly to the Khmer Rouge," he said.

Last week, Cambodian head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who has campaigned for Khmer Rouge participation, expressed "exasperation" at Washington's earlier warnings that there would be no U.S. aid for Cambodia if the group joined the government.

Mr. Qian, for his part, launched China's most direct criticism to date against the Khmer Rouge, saying it had misgivings about the faction's policies and would not supply it with any military assistance to fight the Phnom Penh government.

Asked during a press conference whether China would provide the Khmer Rouge with military aid as it did in the past, he replied: "We are opposed to any faction — or any proposal — that will use military means and will instigate a civil war in that country (Cambodia)."

Mr. Qian said China had misgivings about the policies of the Khmer Rouge, which under the leadership of Pol Pot subjected Cambodia to a reign of terror in the late 1970s.

U.S. seeks to buy back Stingers given to Afghans

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The U.S. administration wants \$55 million to keep Stinger missiles the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) gave to Afghan rebels from falling into the wrong hands, a newspaper reported Friday.

Officials are concerned that the anti-aircraft missiles they provided to help drive Soviet forces from Afghanistan in the 1980s could be bought up by extremists and used against Western airliners, according to the Los Angeles Times.

The shoulder-fired missiles, which originally sold for between \$25,000 and \$30,000, can now fetch as much as \$100,000 apiece on the black market, according to the report.

The CIA made an unsuccessful

attempt to recover the arms through a secret deal with Pakistan and then failed to swap humanitarian supplies for them, according to the Times.

"Whatever we pay to get them is a small price, given the almost insoluble threat to civil aviation that Stingers in the hands of terrorists pose," said Bruce Hoffman with the Rand Corporation, a private research group.

The Times said that former President George Bush provided \$10 million to the CIA after the Soviets were driven from Afghanistan in 1992 but that even then the missiles were prohibitively expensive.

The Stinger, light, shoulder-carried, is a highly accurate missile considered the best weapon of its kind.

Damascus to ration water, faces electricity shortage

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria, anxious to ease out diminishing water supplies, is to start six-months of rationing in the capital Damascus next month.

Adib Zein Al Abidin, director general of the Damascus Water and Drainage Authority, told Reuters the capital's residents would have their supplies cut for six hours every night.

The cuts will be increased to nine hours a night in November, when experts predict that the shortage will be at its most acute.

With people expected to rely more on water from artesian wells and other underground sources, the ministers of health and housing have, meanwhile, urged special care to prevent any contamination.

Damascus residents, who number more than 1.5 million, experienced several months of rationing in 1990 and 1991 but escaped restrictions last year following a wet winter.

Mr. Abidin said the main 'Ain Al Fegy spring which provides Damascus with its drinking water had a capacity of 619,000 cubic metres a day in July while the estimated daily needs of the city were 700,000 cubic metres per day.

With summer temperatures hitting 41 Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit), the capital's daily needs are expected to hit 726,000 cubic metres a day in August.

But at the same time the natural discharge from the spring is expected to drop to around 530,000 cubic metres a day.

Rationing of six hours a day, Mr. Abidin said, was needed to make up the shortfall.

Mr. Abidin, quoting a study by the authority, said that the spring's capacity would drop as the months went by and the shortfall would peak in November at 232,000 cubic metres a day.

The nightly cut then, he added, would be extended to nine hours. The capital's water authority, meanwhile, says that electricity shortages could make life even more difficult.